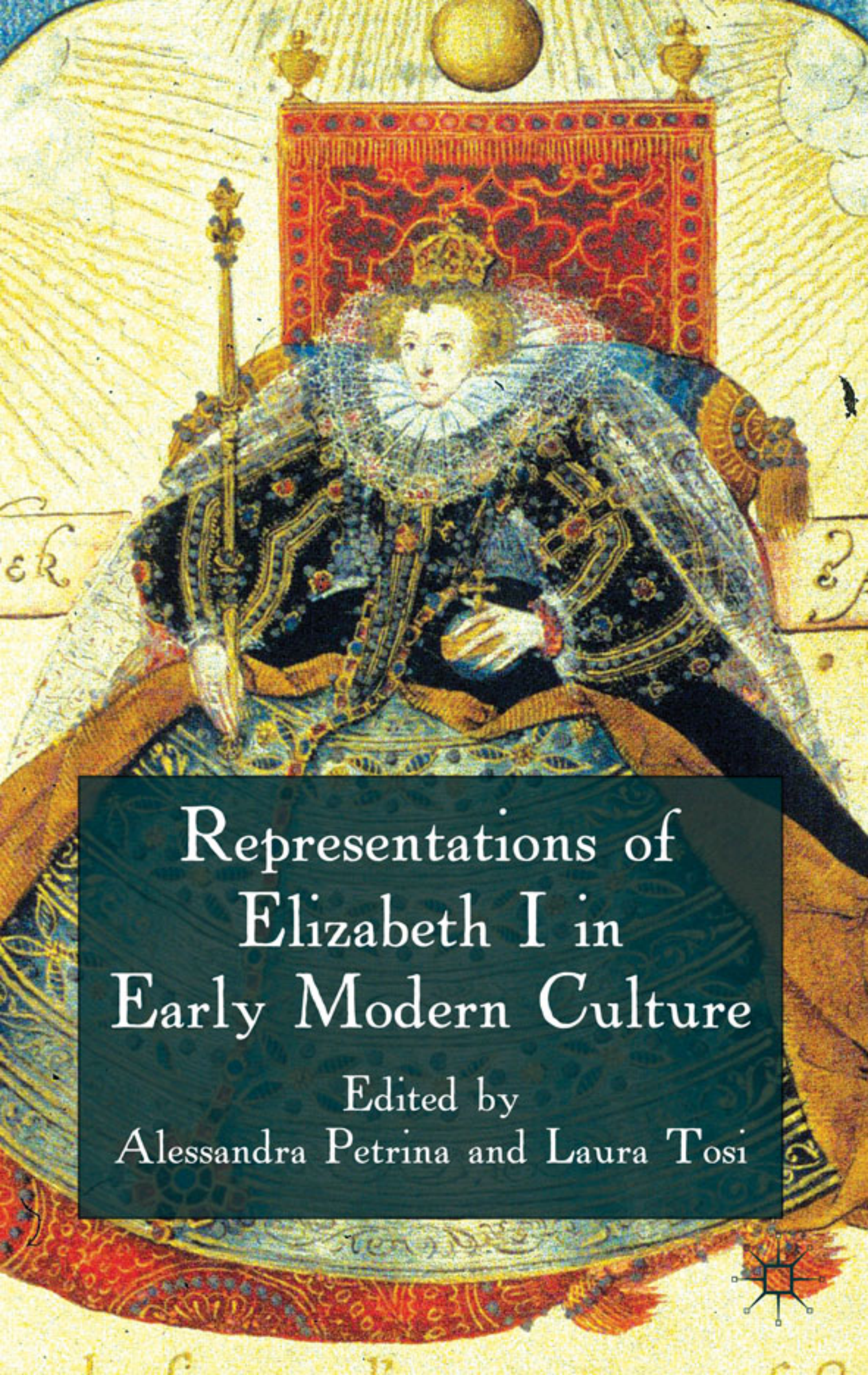


Representations of Elizabeth I in Early Modern Culture

Edited by
Alessandra Petrina and Laura Tosi

Representations of Elizabeth I in Early Modern Culture

Also by Alessandra Petrina

CULTURAL POLITICS IN FIFTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND: the Case of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester

THE KINGIS QUAIR OF JAMES I OF SCOTLAND

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Also by Laura Tosi

HEARTS OF LIGHTNESS: the Magic of Children's Literature (*editor*)

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Representations of Elizabeth I in Early Modern Culture

Edited by

Alessandra Petrina
Associate Professor of English Literature Università degli Studi di Padova

and

Laura Tosi
Associate Professor of English Literature Università Ca' Foscari Venezia

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Alessandra and Laura

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Introduction: a Monarch in Writing

Alessandra Petrina

In the eleventh book of the *Confessions*, Augustine wonders about the search for past and future in human perception, realizing how both exist in the present, in the here and now. The past, the philosopher tells us, is in human narration and human memory, while the future is in prophecy, in premeditation, and in the images created by imagination (Augustinus, 2007, 11.18.23). The various faculties of the human mind exercise control on three modes of time which all exist in the present: in collective terms, if history and national consciousness belong to the 'past of the present', strategy and policy belong to the 'future of the present'.

The reign of Queen Elizabeth I may be taken as an excellent case study of Augustine's structure of time, not only because she would become, after her death, the subject of eternal re-visitation and re-exploring, but also and most importantly because throughout her reign the celebration of the monarch projects an attempted creation of an eternal present: at the same time Elizabeth represents the summa of what is best about the past, whether mythical, Christian or national, and offers the illusion of stability and continuity in the future, an illusion reinforced in the latter part of her reign (and in spite of widespread anxiety about her sterile old age) by the myth of the never-changing Queen. The Mask of Youth, often discussed and justly celebrated by historians as a successful part of an articulated propaganda strategy, does not of course dispel the awareness of the passing of time and of the inevitability of physiological decay and death, but helps separate the body natural of the Queen from her body politic, temporarily but effectively stopping the passing of time in the stillness of its representation. The interplay between the Queen's two bodies, often invoked in this volume, requires a constant renegotiation of time in order to be successfully conveyed to the

subjects, and to become an effective political tool. The Tudor dynasty was especially engaged in this renegotiation, as its establishment and government also required a re-visitation of national history: starting from Henry VII, the appropriation of elements of the collective past such as the Arthurian myth was necessary to legitimate an order only shakily supported by dynastic rights. The ascent to the throne of an unmarried woman whose very birth was of doubtful legitimacy needed a constant affirmation, using all the means at the monarch's disposal.

Many forms of creative expression are engaged in this exercise. Narrative may become an expression of propaganda – the past is revisited either to highlight, by contrast, the excellence of the present, or to insist on a mode of nostalgia that, while expressing regret for what has been lost with the passing of time, evokes a national identity through the firm establishment of historical continuity. Contemporary chronicles are often functional to propaganda, while the use of *exempla* underlines the iconicity of chosen aspects of the present. By the same token, drama, one of the most important forms of entertainment and writing in the Elizabethan age, and often, as shall be seen in this collection, used to propose an indirect dialogue with established powers, offers the cyclical repetition of the past through its representation as an eternally re-staged present. Set phases of the monarch's life, such as the ceremony of coronation, are highlighted as privileged *loci* of continuity, as shown here by Janette Dillon's contribution. Even in this newly shaped form, the present is also the object of continuous renegotiation: as Stephen Orgel notes in his essay, 'one cannot control the implications of imagery, or close it off to interpretation', and painters, masque-devisers and writers engage a continuous interplay with what they perceive as the monarch's will, transforming self-fashioning into a plurality of creative and interpretative voices.

Augustine's time categories have been especially useful to the editors in structuring the present volume, as they have offered the blueprint for an organization of the research which has started from the Queen's own writing and the circulation of her works, followed by a discussion of the development of the concept of *stage* and its role in monarchical representation, as well as the representation of royal (female) power in the eyes of the Queen's contemporaries. The final essays of the collection undertake an exploration of the afterlife not only of Queen Elizabeth but of her whole age, shedding light on the twin concepts of nostalgia and reaction. Not only are various literary and non-literary genres explored, thus mirroring the many voices of Elizabeth's own production; various roles, analogues and personae are explored, in the attempt to capture

a unique plurality. At the same time, historical and literary analysis has been accompanied by iconographic reading, manuscript studies, and the investigation of contemporary texts in languages other than English; the latter exercise has mirrored the activity of a monarch whose writing was, at least in part, 'apparently motivated by her love of languages and desire to remain proficient in them' (May, 2004, p. xix).

The study of 'the present of the present' occupies the first section: self-representation is an integral part of the Queen's actual presence, and her linguistic skills and undoubted literary abilities make her the first writer in her time at the service of her public persona. We have been taught to read self-representation as self-fashioning (Greenblatt, 1980): but the medium chosen, a medium especially favoured by Elizabeth, proposes a radical re-interpretation of the category proposed by Stephen Greenblatt. It goes without saying that writing is by no means the only or even the main mode of Elizabethan representation: the essay opening this volume, Stephen Orgel's analysis of various forms of visual representation accompanying the parable of Elizabeth's reign and the early years of her successor, gives us plenty of evidence on the construction of the royal image in the hands of painters, masque-devisers, even dress-makers. The Queen could of course summon the services of the best artists and artisans; but self-representation could really be of her own devising and under her complete control probably only in literary terms, and in this instance *fashioning* could take any connotation of adaptation and flexibility she might choose. In Orgel's exploration, Elizabeth seeks identification with impossible or inappropriate models, starting, famously, with Richard II; at the same time, partly compelled by circumstances and partly by her own status and age as she ascended the throne, she forges for herself a new image, building in details that would contribute to form the formidable *persona* James had such difficulties in dealing with; but evidently the construction could not simply be her own. In an age in which, as has been underlined, 'some of the greatest [...] poets were politicians, and all of them tried to influence public affairs through their writings' (Norbrook, 2002, p. 1), representation did indeed become the result of collaboration and competition, as the same writers who were called, more or less explicitly, to participate in her celebration would also be involved in national politics at a more direct level, and might also use their writings to redirect political strategies, or to criticize the status quo. As it moves towards the Jacobean age, Orgel's essay also establishes the main lines along which this whole volume moves – the establishment of a parallelism between the Queen who consciously and painstakingly crafted her own image and the King who,

quite simply, disliked painters as well as direct contact with his subjects, though he might be said to have borne a trace of Elizabeth's obsession in the fashioning, not of his own image, but of his written works.

What Elizabeth constructs in the end is an exemplary life, in the medieval sense of the world: while she controls the biographical data at the disposal of chroniclers and historians, she also contributes to the fashioning of an *exemplum*. In this volume, thanks to the contributions of Jonathan Gibson, Carlo Bajetta and above all of Guillaume Coatalen, it is suggested that we have as yet no clear idea of the extent and scope of Elizabeth's writing, and areas such as her handwriting and its relation to contemporary hands are still in need of much discussion and clarification: Gibson's work on the Queen's hands and their development in time highlights a dichotomy that eerily reflects the issues at stake in the discussion of the Queen's role and personality. While in recent years much effort has been put into the establishment of Elizabeth's literary canon, the current standard edition of Elizabeth's works, the collection edited by Marcus, Mueller and Rose, in spite of the meticulous care of the editors and of its promising title, *Collected Works*, still fails to take into account much that was written in languages other than English, as well as the greatest part of the huge volume of correspondence of the Queen. This last part of her literary output is perhaps the most difficult to classify, and not only because of its sheer size, or because of the difficulty of establishing actual and complete authorship even when one is confronted with a holograph manuscript. What would seem the most direct expression of the writer's thoughts, the letter, is a medium of controversial definition, filtered by the linguistic abilities of both the writer and the addressee, by the relation between the two, by the subject matter itself. The very idea of *authorship* takes up a new complexity, in an age in which the concept was under discussion and underwent serious modifications with the advent of print culture, wavering between the dead *auctoritas* and the living *overseer* of a printed text. If correspondence may be read as the best example of scribal circulation, to borrow Harold Love's definition (Love, 1998), in the case of royal letters *author* is at best a collective term, a person who speaks with many voices but may also sum up many voices in one.

A case in point is the correspondence between Elizabeth and James VI of Scotland, here analysed by Paola Baseotto: the relation between the two monarchs in fact required a very delicate handling, as it was forged on family as well as political ties but was at the same time seriously challenged by the fraught relationship between Elizabeth and Mary Stuart. It is one of the instances in which the different levels at which the two

bodies of the Queen speak is put to very good use: neither Elizabeth nor James could ignore the fact that, while in their letter they were addressing each other as siblings or cousins, and invoking their nearness of blood, their respective diplomacies were setting up a system of espionage that, as shown by the activity of the English Secretary of State, Sir Francis Walsingham, occasionally bordered on the obsessive. The comparison offered by the two essays by Paola Baseotto and Guillaume Coatalen, which move in very different areas of the same literary activity, offers an opportunity to evaluate the changing *persona* of the Queen as she addressed different interlocutors. At the same time, Coatalen highlights our need to undertake further archival research, offering us, through the three hitherto unknown letters to Henri IV he presents here, a tantalizing glimpse of a far wider project. Should a really complete edition of Elizabeth's works be put into being, this is certainly one of the areas requiring the twin skills of palaeography and language competence. The Queen's famously difficult hand, especially in her later years, her love of figurative language and the ability she shows in passing from one language to another might make the task appear daunting to future editors. Gibson's and Coatalen's contributions explore these two areas, offering suggestions and guidelines.

In the essay concluding the section, Carlo Bajetta sheds light upon another area in which manuscript reading can become an essential tool in the establishment of Elizabeth's literary canon. Bajetta's is a case study on the manuscript circulation of the Queen's poems, and highlights the importance of manuscript miscellanies and anthologies as evidence of the collocation of the texts in contemporary reception. This has been so far an underestimated factor in early modern text circulation, and its importance has become evident only in the last few years, thanks to studies such as Woudhuysen's on the circulation of Philip Sidney's works (Woudhuysen, 1996). It seems more and more evident that such a factor should become of primary importance in the study of Elizabeth, whose literary output is linked to her political role as well as to her image. The whole section does not only explore the Queen's writing, offering new evidence and new readings of her works; it also takes stock of the existing scholarship, which has seen an upsurge of interest in recent years, while proposing unexplored directions of research.

The middle section of the volume has been conceived rather in the nature of an interlude between Elizabeth's self-representation and the many mirrors contemporary and subsequent writers put before her. Ceremonies and masques include of course an element of writing, and, even more importantly, writing has preserved for us most of the records

available (though in the case of the ceremony of coronation Janette Dillon offers to our analysis also precious iconographic material). At the same time the ritualistic elements of ceremonies and masques suggest an inevitability of the event that fixes it in an eternal present. In his study on *The Subject of Elizabeth*, Louis Montrose devotes a chapter to *iconomachy*, discussing the debate on the cult of Elizabeth and its relation with more explicitly religious cults such as the cult of the Virgin Mary, and challenges the received scholarly opinion that 'the establishment and empowerment of the Elizabethan regime and the Anglican church were accomplished by means of a concerted appropriation of Catholic – and, specifically, Marian – symbolism and ritual' (Montrose, 2006, p. 80). It is indeed important to update such a clear-cut definition not only because, as Montrose notes, the confrontation between the Elizabeth and the Marian cults produced more articulated and complex responses than what has been argued in the seminal studies of Frances Yates (1975), Roy Strong (1977), and more sophisticatedly by Helen Hackett (1995); but also because, once more, in equating Elizabethan regime and Anglican church in their reaction to Catholicism, there is a risk of excessive narrowness and loss of perspective. Dillon's study of the ceremony of coronation suggests that we should pay attention to the icons established by monarchs preceding Elizabeth, and to a relation with the sacred that invests royalty with holiness long before (and well beyond) the Act of Supremacy.

Ritual was not of course the prerogative of Catholicism, or even of the religious sphere; the whole section on masques and ceremonies insists on a lay ritual that projected monarchical power beyond the individual, mortal king or queen. Being anointed by God made the king God's deputy, and therefore imposed a transcendent role on a human being. If the ceremony of coronation required this role of the new monarch, asking him or her to adapt to existing rules (and Dillon highlights how each successive monarch measured him/herself against the requirements of the ceremony), masques attempted the opposite – that is, the establishment of an individual monarch on a transcendental level. What makes Effie Botonaki's and Sara Trevisan's contributions important in this context is their work on female agency in Jacobean masques: a femaleness that might variously work as a projection of the present Queen's own role, or evoke the dead and as yet unforgotten Queen through what Botonaki calls a masked presence. If established and traditional ritual can, to a certain extent, ignore the contingencies of the present, the masque is an exceedingly topical genre, uneasily joining the stillness of ritual with the provisional qualities of current events.

All three essays implicitly respond to the call for action prompted by Stephen Orgel's study of the Jacobean masque (1965), and we have deemed it important to set the three studies at the centre of our work, as a *mise-en-abîme* of our exploration of Elizabethan role-playing and rule-negotiating.

Given the polymorphous and copious literary production of Elizabeth, the third section presents a range of reactions to Elizabeth's continuous effort at self-representation. The various answers offered by contemporary and later writers range from Petruccio Ubaldini's portrait to the representation of queens on stage, to the use of semi-historical, semi-mythological figures such as the Sibyls, which suggest a new approach to the unresolved question of women in power. Such women are the protagonists of Jessica Malay's study, which adds the dimension of prophecy to the propagandistic and programmatic texts surrounding the Queen. The mood here is the imperative, and in the case of prophecies concerning Anne Boleyn the writers and courtiers, as Malay rightly observes, bear the burden of interpretation. The sibylline prophecy invests the Tudor dynasty with an apocalyptic role, transforming their dubious claim into a paragon for monarchs to come. Displacement in time does not rob the prophecy of its force, nor does the fact that their tradition is essentially non-Christian: once again, the key requirement for fashioning is adaptability.

Setting a mirror in front of the prince and making the monarch the glass of rule is a well-worn medieval exercise, and the use of the medieval tradition of mirror for princes is evident in Shakespeare's treatment of the Lancastrian and Yorkist queens, as shown by Kavita Mudan's work on the third part of *Henry VI* and on *Richard III*. However, as the celebration of the Queen interlaces more and more with mythical, historical or classical figures, the work of the scholar, the poet, and even the propagandist suggests a circle which increasingly threatens to become a figure nought (Rundle, 2002, p. 29), engulfing the central figure into an empty cypher. It is part of Queen Elizabeth's uniqueness that she maintained a strong and recognizable individuality in spite of this articulated work of image-building; the paradox is all the more surprising given the traditional reading of female figures and their role in society, as highlighted here in particular by Yvonne Oram's and Kavita Mudan's contributions. Everything predicated on her by her contemporaries, whether they were devout subjects or more critical or hostile voices, becomes in our eyes, to some extent, an answer to what she predicated on herself. This is particularly evident in Giovanni Iamartino's study of Petruccio Ubaldini, another study on displacement, as Ubaldini

was not only a foreigner, but also an adventurer who made his bid for fortune in England, first as a soldier and then as a reporter and correspondent. Working for the Queen and making her his dedicatee granted him a living, though he never rose to great heights; today, his writings offer an interesting contraposition to the portraits of queens in the Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists, as explored by Oram, Mudan and Tosi. If Shakespeare, Marston, Webster and other playwrights could evoke the presence of the Queen through the ruling women they presented on stage, suggesting comparisons and occasionally daring to deal with delicate themes such as old age through the medium of dramatic fiction (this is the central concern of Oram's essay), Ubaldini offers a direct view of a monarch with whom he was in contact; yet, as the reader realizes, the filter here is not offered by the intermediary figures of Cleopatra, Katherine of Aragon or the Duchess of Malfi, but by Ubaldini's own precarious position and his evident will to please. Mirrors cannot but have a distorting connotation.

Distortion is in fact one of the key concepts of the whole section, thanks to the manipulations of propaganda, as in the use of sibylline prophecy, or to the requirements of patronage, or even to the search of dramatic relevance. The study of prophecy shows how it can become an interesting exercise in projecting the future back on what had been told in the past; nostalgia, as shown by Kristine Johanson in her analysis of Shakespeare's *First Part of the Contention*, can equally distort our vision of past events, transforming chronicle into fiction. Johanson's reading of the allegedly golden age of Elizabeth as not itself immune from nostalgia is also a useful reminder to the modern scholar of the perspective offered by time when considering the early modern period in European history. Following widespread debate (more on the side of the medievalists than of the early modernists, it must be said), James Simpson's *Reform and Cultural Revolution* first offered a systematic view of continuity between late medieval and early modern English culture, stopping however at Elizabeth's ascent to the throne (Simpson, 2002), while in her inaugural lecture at Cambridge, Helen Cooper took the argument for continuity further, inviting us to consider Shakespeare as the end-result of a process begun in the Middle Ages (Cooper, 2006). Johanson's work is a welcome addition since it offers a view from the future, so to speak, looking back on its own past, and showing how Elizabethan collective consciousness appeared to feel the present as the (not necessarily radiant) conclusion of a long order of years, rather than, as has often been contended, and as Elizabethan propaganda strove to persuade everyone, as a new beginning.

In this complex interplay, mirrors offer a fitting conclusion. A Queen who, when she reached old age, became so obsessed by mirrors that she would not allow them near her is a woman realizing that control of her image was doomed to ultimate failure; her role and her gender suggest a new facet to an image of the looking-glass that had become a staple of medieval English (and Scottish) literature, and that had even prompted the establishment of a literary genre – the mirror for princes, or *Fürstenspiegel*. Laura Tosi's essay, exploring Webster's *Duchess of Malfi* to see how the image of the late Queen would resonate in the portrait of the Duchess, traces the migration of the mirror for princes to more domestic mirrors for female rulers, exercising a double function which proposes a re-unification of the two bodies Elizabeth had long striven to separate. In a sense, therefore, dramatic representation closes the circle.

The Elizabethan case study is a surprisingly fruitful laboratory; something which becomes particularly and sometimes painfully evident when the Elizabethan present becomes past, memory, nostalgia. Over sixty years after Elizabeth's death, Margaret Cavendish will use the phrase 'authoress of the whole world' for the protagonist of her utopian novel *The Blazing World* (1666), and the twenty-first century reader cannot escape the impression that if seventeenth-century women could explore the female sphere in terms of authorship and creation, this was due in large measure to the everlasting impression left by this authoress and Queen. Mirroring the times, backwards and forwards, appears to be the central concern of this volume, as it seems to have been a central concern for a history-conscious age such as the age of Elizabeth. The relations between power and its representation has been here explored from a plurality of viewpoints, but as usual the Queen should have the last word, in her words to the poet Paul Schede:

> But you are prince of poets, I, a subject
> To a poet when you choose me as the theme
> Of your high song.
>
> (Elizabeth I, 2000, p. 302)

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1
Prologue: I am Richard II

Stephen Orgel

My title alludes to William Lambarde's well-known account of his interview with Queen Elizabeth in August, 1601, seven months after the Essex rebellion and Essex's execution for treason. Lambarde was the royal archivist, and had brought Elizabeth a summary of the historical documents stored in the Tower of London. She paused at the reign of Richard II, and when Lambarde asked why, she replied, memorably, 'I am Richard II, know ye not that?' Lambarde acknowledged that he understood this to be an allusion to the actions of the late Earl of Essex, who had commissioned Shakespeare's company to revive the old tragedy of *Richard II* on the eve of the rebellion. Lambarde responded, 'Such a wicked imagination was determined and attempted by a most unkind gentleman, the most adorned creature that ever your majesty made.' This was obviously the right response, and Elizabeth continued, 'He that will forget God will also forget his benefactors; this tragedy was played forty times in open streets and houses.' In fact, that season Shakespeare's tragedy was played only that once: as the actor Augustine Phillips later explained to the authorities, the play was 'so old and so long out of use that they should have small or no company at it' (that is, it would have attracted no audience), but Essex's men had subsidized the performance to the tune of 40 shillings – 480 groundling tickets, or 240 seats in the gallery – and so the company 'at their request were content to play it'. Clearly Elizabeth saw the implications of that single performance extending well beyond the confines of the Globe and a particular afternoon. 'Forty times in open streets and houses': her fantasy made the whole of London a huge civic theatre in which she was continually mimed and deposed.

Most accounts of the interview with Lambarde end here. But Lambarde's memorandum continues, and it is the next bit I wish to

focus on. 'Returning to Richard II', Lambarde says, 'she demanded "Whether I had seen any true picture, or lively representation of his countenance and person?" ' 'None', Lambarde replied, 'but such as be in common hands.' The Queen said she had a portrait of Richard. 'The Lord Lumley, a lover of antiquities, discovered it fastened on the backside of a door of a base[ment] room; which he presented unto me, praying, with my good leave, that I might put it in order with the ancestors and successors; I will command Thomas Kneavet, Keeper of my House and Gallery at Westminster, to show it unto thee' (cited in Shakespeare, 1956, pp. lvii–lix).

Figure 1.1 is the painting now in Westminster Abbey. It is the earliest known painted portrait of an English monarch, and is ascribed to André Beauneveu, a Valenciennes painter resident at the English court in the late fourteenth century. The portrait, therefore, could have been done from life – it was, at any rate, done while the King was still living. It shows him in full formal regalia, holding the orb and sceptre. His age is difficult to guess. He has no facial hair, and it has the look of a coronation portrait. Richard ascended the throne at the age of ten, but the image is so stylized that, though he is clearly in coronation robes, it could represent him at any point in his twenty-year reign. The lack of facial hair is not unusual for royal portraits of the period – Figures 1.2 and 1.3 are Richard III and Henry V, both depicted clean-shaven, as is, at the end of the century, Henry VII in Torrigiano's superb bust (Figure 1.4). All these monarchs are unambiguously mature. Figure 1.5 is a miniature of the young Henry VIII, aged 22, in 1513. It is he who subsequently changes the facial convention, in emulation of the monarch he most envied: according to a Venetian envoy in 1519, 'hearing that King Francis wore a beard, he allowed his to grow' (*Calendar*, 1864–1947, p. 559). Nevertheless, the earliest miniature of the King painted by Lucas Hornebolte in 1525, when Henry was 34 (Figure 1.6), still shows him as clean shaven. In another Hornebolte miniature painted only a few months later (Figure 1.7), however, he is bearded and, to the modern eye at least, much improved. The pattern is definitively established by Holbein in the 1530s (Figure 1.8) and since most of the portraits from this period are done in the context of marriage negotiations, they emphasize his virility and patriarchal ambitions, with the beard as an obviously relevant accessory. Figure 1.9 dates from the year of his brief and disastrous marriage to Anne of Cleves – the beard in this case must have been especially disillusioning, for both of them.

Let us return now to Elizabeth's portrait of Richard II. All the other representations of the King painted during his lifetime, such as that in



Figure 1.1 Portrait of Richard II in coronation robes, attributed to André Beauneveu, Westminster Abbey © Dean and Chapter of Westminster

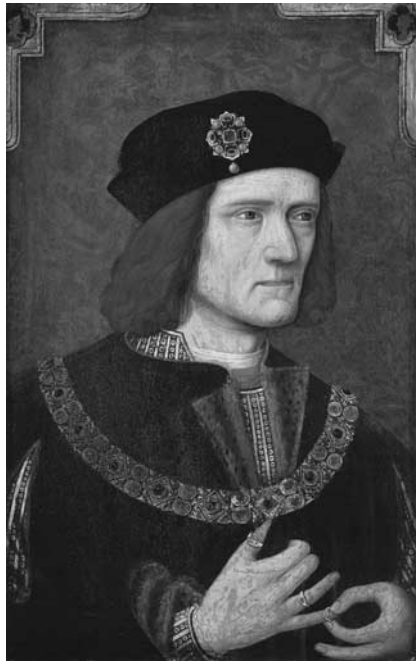


Figure 1.2 Richard III, The Royal Collection © 2010 Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

the Wilton Diptych (Figure 1.10), are similarly beardless – he is 23 years old here. The later portrait in Figure 1.11, however, probably sixteenth-century, and obviously based on the Westminster painting, has facial hair added – modestly in this case, nothing assertively masculine in the Henry VIII style, but enough to establish that the King is not a child. On his tomb effigy in Figure 1.12 he is elegantly bearded – the facial hair that, until Henry VIII, was inappropriate to portraits of the living dignifies him in death.

Elizabeth, coming to the throne with a compromised claim, certainly had as her greatest asset her Protestantism; but she also brought to the succession her gender and her youth, which probably generated the assumption among her powerful supporters that, unlike her half-sister Mary, she would be both fecund and manageable. This was of course an illusion, and she thoroughly redefined the monarchy, largely through her extraordinary personal style. An essential element of that style was aesthetic and sartorial, beginning with her coronation portrait

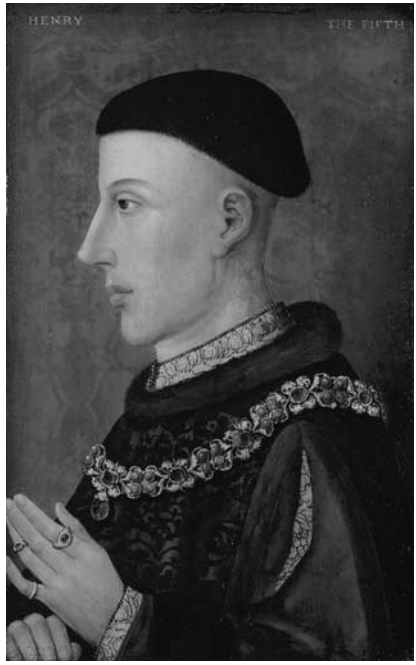


Figure 1.3 Henry V, The Royal Collection © 2010 Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

in Figure 1.13. The original is lost; this is a copy from the beginning of the seventeenth century. In comparison with the individualized and assertive Holbein and Hornebolte portraits of her father, or the domesticated portraits of her sister by Antonio Mor, the painting is strikingly iconic. It employs a pictorial formula used occasionally on royal documents, but it is most similar to the Westminster portrait of Richard II. Roy Strong writes that the medieval conventions of the representation of royalty were being revived here (Strong, 1987, p. 20), which is doubtless true; but in fact the only comparable earlier English royal portrait is the portrait of Richard; there *are* no other medieval English coronation portraits. The model that was being revived was that of the portrait of Richard II. Since the painting must always have been in the royal collection, was it in fact available to the painter in 1559, and did it disappear into the basement only after it had served its exemplary function? Perhaps Elizabeth had even seen it at the time of her accession; and in that case, it was not discovered by Lord Lumley, but rediscovered, and restored to its place in her lineage.



Figure 1.4 Pietro Torrigiano, King Henry VII, portrait bust, 1509–11 © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

'I am Richard II' indeed. The two paintings document the creation of a carefully crafted ideology. Elizabeth's coronation portrait returns to the model of the last English monarch with an unquestioned claim to the throne – it goes back beyond her parents' dubious marriage and her own bastardization, beyond her grandfather Henry VII's seizure of the throne by conquest, beyond the disputed claims of York and Lancaster and the Wars of the Roses, beyond Henry IV's usurpation and deposition of the last unquestionably legitimate English King, whose model she adopts despite the fact that he was not her ancestor. The painting, in short, iconographically abolishes a century and a half of both English history and royal iconography, and returns us to the last moment when the legitimacy of the monarchy was not a problem. Indeed, Elizabeth's claim was always more exemplary than genealogical. Half a century later, ironically, in the context of the Essex rebellion, the image had become relevant again, in the worst way.

The story of Elizabeth's self-fashioning has been well covered, particularly by Janet Arnold in her study of the royal wardrobe, by Roy Strong



Figure 1.5 Portrait of Henry VIII aged 22, painted by an unknown artist of the British School about 1513 © Berger Collection at the Denver Art Museum

on the portraits, and more generally by Susan Frye in her excellent book *Elizabeth I*, tellingly subtitled *The Competition for Representation* (Arnold, 1988; Strong, 1987; Frye, 1993). Competing versions of the Queen were visible throughout the reign. The iconic, unapproachable, doll-like figure of the coronation portrait existed simultaneously with the endlessly desirable heiress in Figure 1.14, the most eminently marriageable woman in Europe, demure and virtuous, wonderfully accomplished, as in Figure 1.15, always increasingly splendidly dressed and displaying astonishing jewellery, an indication of how rich a prize she would constitute for any husband. Her virtues are summed up in the well-known reworking of the Judgment of Paris in Figure 1.16, where she combines the virtues of Venus, Minerva and Juno, everything one could want in an aristocratic wife; but in which the golden apple of love, no longer in the gift of some irresponsible shepherd prince, has become the orb of state and is firmly in her grasp.

But of course the power inherent in the promise of marriage was dependent on her never exercising it – her strategy was the opposite of



Figure 1.6 Lucas Hornebolte, Henry VIII 1526–26 © Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

her half-sister's, who thought that marriage to the most powerful man in Europe was the key to controlling the course of her own realm. It was a strategy that, once determined upon, left her no other options. Elizabeth elected to leave all her options perpetually open – she raised flirtation to an instrument of policy. It was an instrument that was effective as long as she remained marriageable but unmarried. Figure 1.17 shows the last time she represented herself as a marriageable woman, the magnificent frontispiece to Saxton's *Atlas*, the first comprehensive survey of England and Wales and the first national atlas undertaken anywhere, published in 1579, in the midst of her two-year flirtation with the Duc d'Alençon. She takes possession of her realm as patron of geography. As A. B. Hind has shown, she was actively involved in the design of this portrait, a humanized and sexualized refiguration of the formula of the coronation painting (Hind, 1952, p. 73). The imagery surrounding her places the masters of geography and astronomy at her service; but most striking of all are the implications of the *impresa* at the centre of the frieze (Figure 1.17).



Figure 1.7 Lucas Hornebolte, Henry VIII 1525–26, The Royal Collection © 2010 Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

I have written in detail about this in my essay 'Gendering the Crown', to which I refer readers for the whole argument. Above the Queen, in an oval at the centre of the frieze, is a group of three figures. A naked woman bearing an olive branch and an armed woman bearing a sword embrace; behind the armed woman, a *putto* holds a set of scales. This represents the loving union of Justice and Peace, as predicted by Psalm 85, 'iustitia et pax deosculatae sunt' (Orgel, 2002, pp. 107–28). To appropriate the papal emblem and redefine it for the Queen, Peace has been undressed, and the *putto* bearing Justice's scales has been added. The English version makes the issue of female sexuality insistently manifest. A naked woman accompanied by a *putto* inescapably suggests Venus and Cupid; and indeed, one's first impression of the *impresa* is that it represents the more commonplace coupling of Venus and Mars – in the *topos*, the armed woman, Pallas or Bellona standing in for Justice, has replaced the god of war. The association of Venus with Elizabeth was surely intentional: Saxton's *Atlas* was published, as I have said, in the midst of the negotiations over the Alençon match, the last time the Queen was to



Figure 1.8 Hans Holbein the Younger, *Portrait of King Henry VIII, c.* 1534–36 © Museo Thyssen–Bornemisza, Madrid



Figure 1.9 (After Hans Holbein), Henry VIII *c.* 1540, Galleria Nazionale, Rome © Archivio Fotografico Soprintendenza Speciale per il Patrimonio Storico Artistico ed Etnoantropologico e per il Polo Museale della città di Roma

represent herself as a marriageable woman. The allusion to Venus, moreover, makes a genealogical claim: Elizabeth is descended from Venus, the mother of Aeneas and the great-grandmother of Brutus, legendary founder of Britain and Elizabeth's ancestor. The goddess of love is the source of the British royal line. The *impresa* prefixed to this survey of Elizabeth's kingdom insists on the absolute authority of the feminine, embodied in the English Queen.



Figure 1.10 The Wilton Diptych © National Gallery

But of course one cannot control the implications of imagery, or close it off to interpretation. The claim of programmatic chastity always had to compete with the assumption of aristocratic promiscuity, especially when the aristocrat was an unmarried woman; and doubtless the introduction of Venus and Cupid into the royal *impresa* was a way of both acknowledging the Queen's sexuality, and at the same time attempting to keep it under control. Nevertheless, scurrilous stories – for example, that she had had a child by Leicester – made the rounds; and that particular one was still circulating in the next century. In the same way, her first chosen image of royal legitimacy, Richard II enthroned, also always carried with it the spectre of his deposition – the farther Elizabeth got from her accession the more dangerous the ancient precedent became. Is it surprising that the portrait was banished to the basement, out of sight?

The dangers of deposition were secondary, however, to the reality of Elizabeth's remaining unmarried and without an heir. At a strange



Figure 1.11 King Richard II by an unknown artist, 16th century © National Portrait Gallery

moment near the end of Shakespeare's celebratory history *Henry VIII* an old lady appears before the King interrupting some business of state. 'I guess thy message', he says; 'Is the queen delivered?/Say ay, and of a boy.' The old lady, astonishingly, complies: 'Ay, ay, my liege, and of a lovely boy.' A moment later she amends the message: ''Tis a girl/ Promises boys hereafter' (5.1.163–6). The King is not pleased, and undertips the messenger, who grumpily departs. The incident has no parallel in the historical sources – it is all Shakespeare – and even among audiences at the Globe in 1613, with a King and a male heir finally in place again, it must have resonated strangely. For Henry's posterity, after all, Elizabeth represented the end of the line; and she certainly did not promise the accession of James I, whom she declined to name as her successor until she was on her deathbed – and it is not clear that she did so even then. Not only was the Scottish King not Henry VIII's descendant, he derived from a branch of the family specifically excluded from



Figure 1.12 Richard II tomb effigy, Westminster Abbey © Dean and Chapter of Westminster

the succession by the King's will. Elizabeth's father had done everything he could to preclude the Scottish succession. James's presence on the throne represented the ultimate failure of Henry's dynastic dream. The dramatic moment introduces a strange blip into the play's triumphal rhetoric. The original title under which it was performed at the Globe was *All Is True*. What kind of truth does this incident, indeed, does the whole of the triumphal drama, represent?

In short, who believed in all the age's idealizing iconography? Did Elizabeth herself believe it? Spenser's endless epic encomium *The Faerie Queene* promised to immortalize her royal mythology, but it earned the poet little: not the laureateship, not a place at court, only a modest payment and a ticket back to Ireland. Ben Jonson told William Drummond that 'Q. Elizabeth never saw herself after she became old in a true glass; they painted her, and sometimes would vermilion her nose. She had always about Christmas evens set dice [that is, loaded dice] that threw



Figure 1.13 Queen Elizabeth I by an unknown artist, *circa* 1559 © National Portrait Gallery



Figure 1.14 Elizabeth as Princess, attributed to William Scrots, *c.* 1546–47, The Royal Collection © 2010 Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

sixes or fives, and she knew not they were other, to make her win and esteem herself fortunate' (Jonson, 1985, p. 602). This describes a Queen trapped in her image and manipulated by her servants; and even if the stories were untrue, the very fact that they were in circulation argues a sceptical public.



Figure 1.15 Nicholas Hilliard, miniature of Elizabeth playing the lute © By kind permission of the Berkeley Will Trust (photo Courtauld Institute of Art)

The Puritan barrister John Stubbs's *Gaping Gulf Wherein England is Like to Be Swallowed*, published in 1579 at the height of the Alençon negotiations, heartlessly deconstructed the royal mythology. The pamphlet included nothing that was not a popular commonplace, but it became notorious because of Elizabeth's explosive reaction to it, which was outraged, panicky and vindictive. Stubbs is undeniably rude about Alençon, whom he despises as an adventurer and a Papist, but his attitude toward Elizabeth, while certainly not reverent, is unquestionably loyal and loving. The tone he takes might best be described as fraternal: scolding and impatient, but also affectionate, indulgent, full of care and concern; above all, straightforward and commonsensical – about matters like Elizabeth's advanced age, for example. What, Stubbs asks, does a young man like that want with an old woman like you? (p. 72). Young men only pursue older women for their money; and so forth. Such arguments are certainly tactless, but scarcely treasonable. The Queen, however, was furious, and wanted Stubbs and the publisher charged with seditious



Figure 1.16 Attributed to Hans Eworth, *Queen Elizabeth and the Three Goddesses*, 1569, The Royal Collection © 2010 Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

libel and hanged. This turned out to be legally impossible – the case proved to be an important test of the limits of sovereignty, and constituted a defeat for the Queen – but the perpetrators were imprisoned (ironically, charged under a statute of Mary Tudor's providing penalties for those who libelled her husband Philip II of Spain) and their right hands were cut off by the public executioner, a sentence which, however grisly and symbolically appropriate, cannot have given Elizabeth much satisfaction. Stubbs on the scaffold waved the bloody stump and shouted 'God save the queen', still infuriatingly affirming that he had only her interests at heart, that he knew best; and the crowd agreed (Stubbs, 1988, pp. xxxiv–xxxvi). He was a popular hero. A reading of the pamphlet reveals no intention of either sedition or libel, but it does tell a good deal about Elizabeth's sense of the crucial importance, both political and personal, of the fictions with which she surrounded herself, the fictions that were to be enshrined in *The Faerie Queene*. Stubbs's model for his relation to the sovereign is not the chivalric court, but the family. Spenser sets his fiction in the distant past to keep it safe, he says, from the envy of present time – that, for Spenser, is the reality. We surely err



Figure 1.17 Remigius Hogenberg (?), frontispiece to Christopher Saxton's *Atlas of England and Wales*, 1579 © By permission of the Warden and Fellows of New College, Oxford

in taking the Queen's version of herself as a working model for the life of the commonwealth.

The accession of the King of Scotland to Elizabeth's throne was greeted with enthusiasm and a certain amount of relief – the issue of what was to happen next had at last been resolved. James made his way to his new kingdom with all deliberate speed, stopping along the way at various great houses to be congratulated and feasted, bestowing honours, and promising much more. He appeared a grateful choice; certainly he was a generous one. There is no formal coronation portrait – he disliked sitting for painters – but the early portraits from his reign avoid the traditional royal iconography of crown, orb and sceptre, in favour of the attributes of a rich aristocrat. In the Hilliard miniature in Figure 1.18 he wears the Order of St George and a complex jewel in his feathered hat. He might be one of the stylish young men he doted on and was continually ennobling. It was not until late in the reign that he adopted the royal iconography, on the frontispiece to his *Works* (Figure 1.19), published in 1616.

As for his accession to the English crown, the difference between Queen Elizabeth's enthusiastic and carefully crafted response to the pageantry that celebrated the beginning of her reign and James's delayed, reserved and grudging one to his is notorious, and in both cases the response itself was performative, part of a show for the much larger audience of spectators who lined the route. It was also, probably more significantly, a performance for the audience who footed the bill – in the case of civic pageantry, the guilds, city fathers, Inns of Court, foreign merchants, or private magnates, for whom the production was an investment; and the responses of both the chief actor/spectator and the civic audience should be considered in that context, as the return on the investment. When King James balked at participating in London's pageant celebrating his accession, both the refusal and the response to it were matters of public policy, and the whole project could not simply be abandoned. The entry had originally been planned for July 1603, to coincide with his coronation. But the plague was raging, and the entry was repeatedly postponed – so long that the seven triumphal arches, which had been erected along the route at great expense, had to be dismantled and stored. James finally consented to submit to what he made clear he considered an ordeal in March 1604.

What did the City want the King to see and hear; and more important, what did the City want to display him seeing and hearing? The pageant constitutes an exemplary case for considering the interaction



Figure 1.18 Nicholas Hilliard, portrait of James I, 1604–09 © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

of symbolic fictions and their subjects. To begin with, much of the auditory part was notional, since (as Thomas Dekker reports in his account) many of the speeches could not be heard – acoustics were always a problem at these events; moreover, because of time constraints some were omitted entirely (Dekker, 1604, sig.A4v). This means that for the spectators, there was effectively no elucidation: this was spectacle without meaning. By far the most important element was the arches, created by the architect Stephen Harrison, who published engravings of them that constitute the best record we have of an English royal entry before the Restoration. I shall not here walk through the whole of the entry, but will rather indicate some particular points of tension. Figure 1.20 is the first arch, at Fenchurch, at the east end of the City – the design was Ben Jonson's, realized by Harrison. It is an epitome of London, crowned with a model of the city, and including two little stages for musicians and niches for actors. Initially it was covered with a silk curtain painted with



Figure 1.19 James I, *Works* (1616), frontispiece

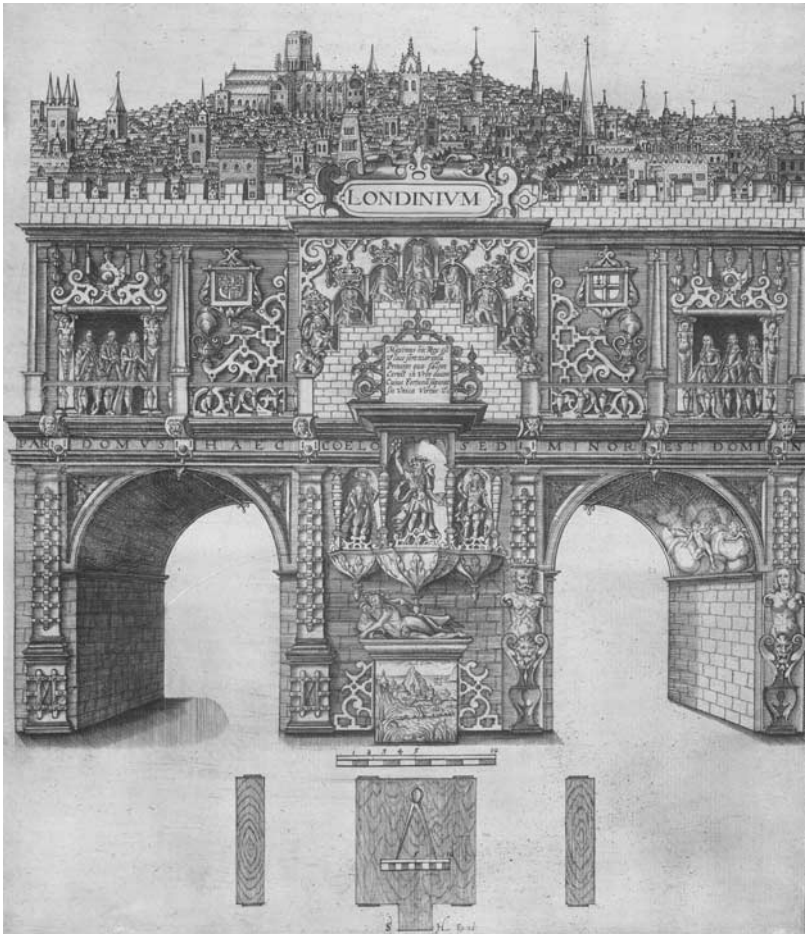


Figure 1.20 Stephen Harrison, the arch at Fenchurch, from *Archs of Triumph* (London, 1604) © The British Library Board

thick clouds. As the King approached, the curtain was drawn. Jonson (who wrote the speeches) explains that the clouds represent the City's 'long want of his wished sight', but the King's appearance at last is the sun that has dispersed the mists. Queen Elizabeth might have managed a gracious impromptu reply to the implied criticism of the royal dilatoriness, but the King listened, as he did throughout the day, in silence. The allegorical figures on the arch are Monarchia Britannica with a globe

and sceptre; Divine Wisdom, with dove and serpent and the motto *Per me reges regnant*, kings reign through me; and Tamesis, the river Thames, the life blood of the city. Genius Urbis, the Spirit of the City, however, delivers an unexpected sting. He holds a goblet and a bundle of twigs, 'to signifie increase and indulgence' (presumably in reverse order); but he is accompanied by two figures representing the City's counsel and its military strength – through these, Jonson says, the City is able 'to extinguish the king's enemies and preserve his citizens'; but they also clearly imply the City's power and the dangers of ignoring it (Jonson, 1941, pp. 85–6).

On the next arch (Figure 1.21), erected by the Italian merchants in London, Henry VII is invoked in a large central panel: the first Tudor monarch, seated, receives James I on horseback and passes the royal sceptre to him. The motto, *Hic vir hic est*, this is the man, he is here, declares James both the right man and a true counterpart to his ancestor: *this* man is also *this* one. As Elizabeth's iconography had gone back to the last legitimate monarch, James's goes back to the usurping monarch from whom his own legitimacy derives. James is declared Henry's true heir, and Henry and James are identified as uniters of the realm and bringers of peace.

Near the Royal Exchange the large and prosperous community of Dutch merchants had erected their arch (Figure 1.22). It is vastly more elaborate than the Italian arch (it filled the entire width of the street), combining painting, sculpture and living figures. At the top stands Providence; below her is a portrait of King James, and below this, in a central niche, seventeen children in native costume represent the seventeen provinces of the Netherlands. Various paintings on the structure depicted scenes of Dutch industry, clothmaking, fishing and shipping. The arch's complex allegorical scheme was elucidated at length by a boy orator exhorting the King to remember that he is subject to Providence, and recalling Elizabeth's military support for the Protestant cause in the Low Countries. This was a message that the pacifist King who believed he ruled by divine right could not have found at all sympathetic.

The King proceeded in sullen silence through three more arches. The final arch (Figure 1.23), at Temple Bar, the west end of London, was dedicated to Janus, the god of new beginnings, looking forward and backward. Designed and described by Jonson, it is learnedly classical, and his account of it is heavily annotated with citations from scholarly authorities. This was Jonson's bid for the scholar-king's attention, but the message was very much the City's: Eirene, Peace, has at her side Plutus, a boy carrying 'a heap of gold ingots to express riches'. Through

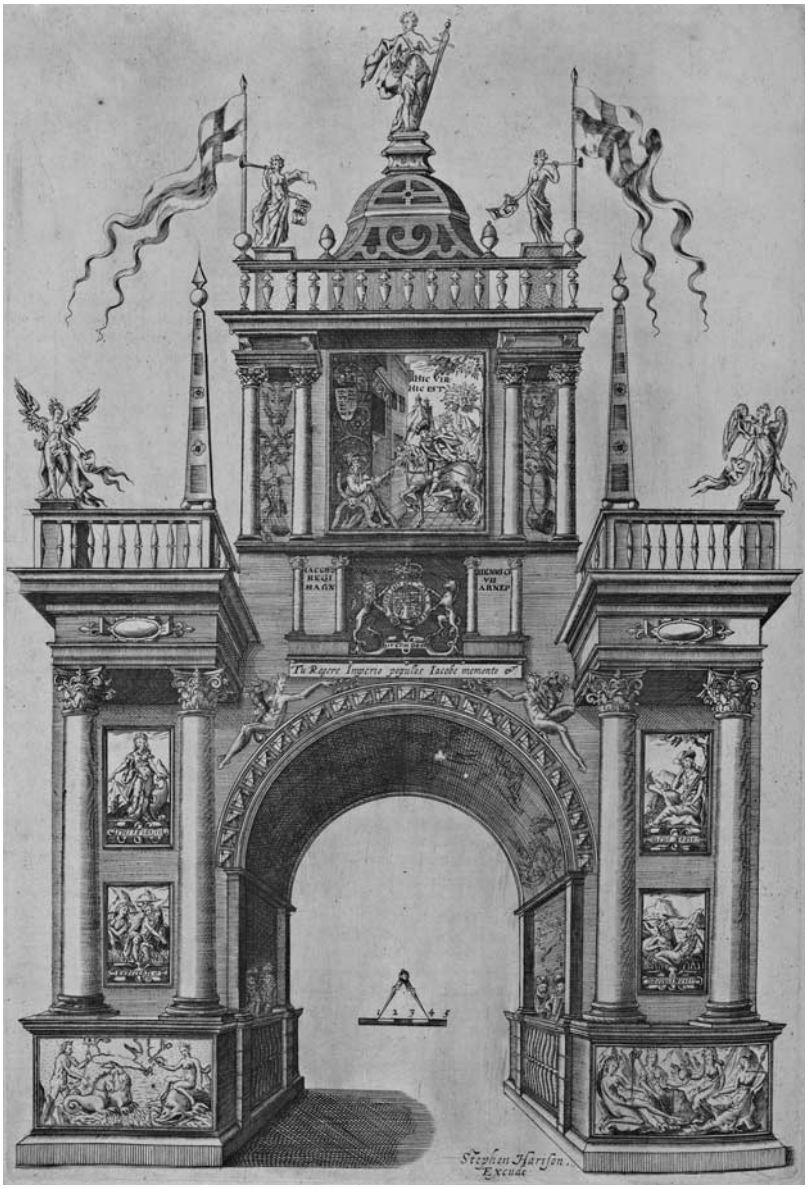


Figure 1.21 Stephen Harrison, the Italian arch, from *Archs of Triumph* (London, 1604) © The British Library Board

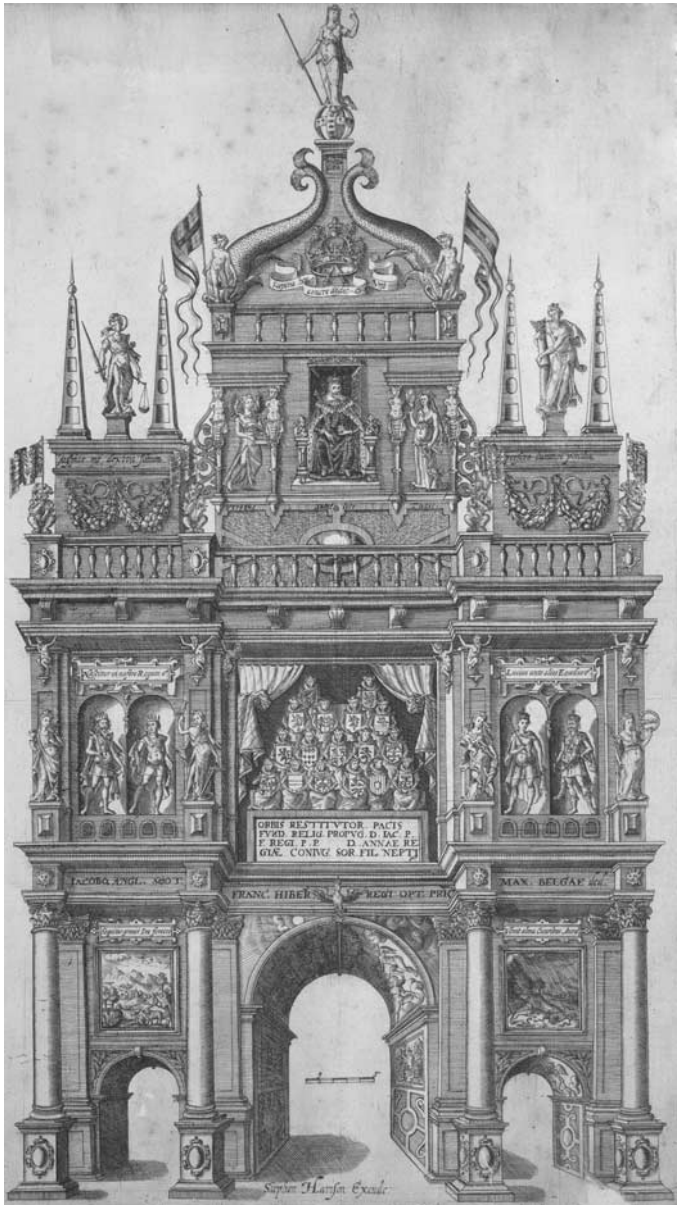


Figure 1.22 Stephen Harrison, the Dutch arch, from *Archs of Triumph* (London, 1604) © The British Library Board

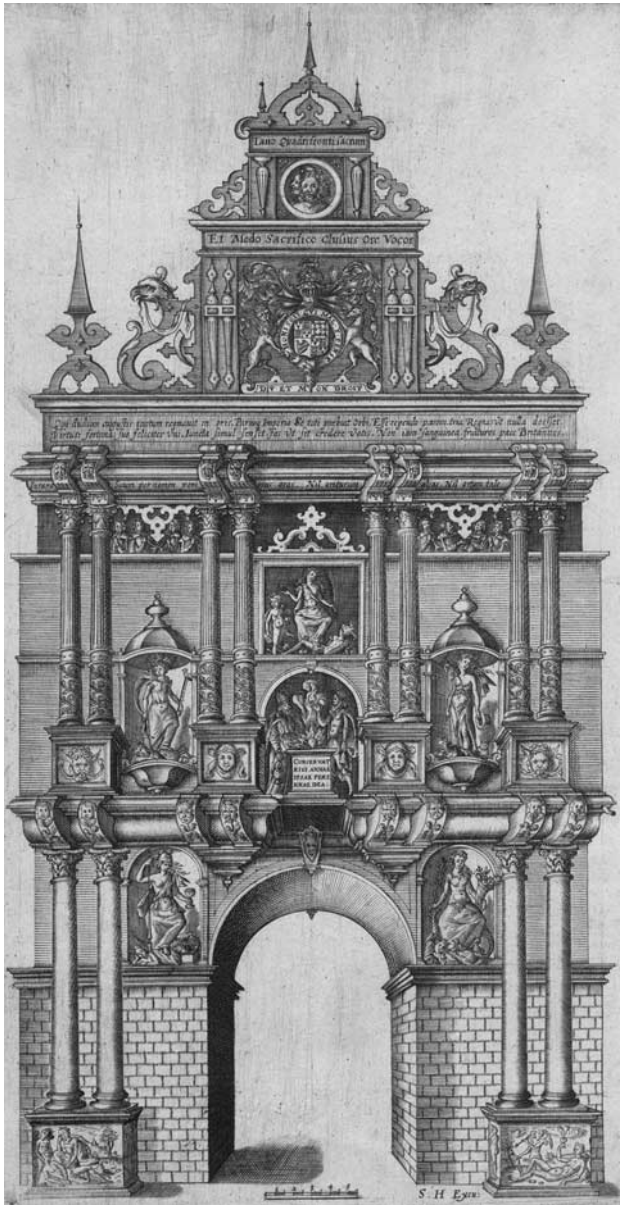


Figure 1.23 Stephen Harrison, the Janus arch at Temple Bar, from *Archs of Triumph* (London, 1604) © The British Library Board

James's peace and the City's wealth, Mars lies defeated at Eirene's feet. Jonson's speakers, a Roman flamen or priest and the Genius of the city, observe the date of the performance – the Ides of March. The flamen has kindled a fire to celebrate the distinctly inauspicious day (there is of course no allusion to the death of Caesar; but the anniversary would not have gone unnoticed). The Genius, however, stops him: 'these dead rites / Are long since buried, and new power excites / More high and hearty flames' (Jonson, 1941, p. 102).

New Power – it is precisely that new power that the whole pageant, from one end of the City to the other, both celebrates and exercises: the power of the King, but also power *over* the King. James's reaction to the crowd, as a sign of the city's force, is telling here. The courtier Arthur Wilson recalled the occasion half a century later:

> The King, with the Queen and Prince [...] rode from the Tower to Whitehall; the City and Suburbs being one great Pageant, wherein he must give his ears leave to suck in their gilded Oratory, though never so nauseious to the stomach. He was not like his Predecessor, the late Queen of famous memory, that with a wel-pleased affection met her peoples Acclamations [...] He endured this days brunt with patience, being assured he should never have such another. (Wilson, 1653, pp. 12–13)

James hated and feared crowds, and had no talent for manipulating them. His biographer David Harris Willson quotes a visitor to the court who reported that 'the King [...] would swear with passion, asking his attendants what the people would have. He was told they came of love to see him. Then would he cry out in Scottish, "God's wounds! I will pull down my breeches and they shall also see my arse" ' (Willson, 1956, p. 165).

It is clear why it was important for the City to put on this show, a public declaration on the one hand of allegiance and support, and on the other of the royal dependence on the commercial and financial powers of the kingdom. But when the King resisted, what was in it for the City and the guilds to force him to give the performance, as he eventually did with such bad grace? Obviously this performance was not for the King's benefit; the King became, unwillingly, an actor in a larger drama presented by the City, the central element of which was precisely the City's ability to produce the King as a participant in the pageantry. The show was ultimately less a celebration than a show of force.

Theatre is a two-way affair, action and reaction, and both inventors and audiences have their own purposes. In the case of festival modes the

interaction with the various audiences – subject, patrons, onlookers – is far more complex, essential and palpable than it is in the case of books, or even of drama in performance. In interpreting such performances, we are inevitably limited by our evidence, which is invariably a written text, whether a script or a description. As should already be clear, I am especially interested in those cases where something goes wrong, and where the text gives us no help in understanding what happened. I now turn in conclusion to three final examples, two from the courtly world of the masque and one from the commercial theatre.

Sir John Harington's satiric account of the masque of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, devised for the entertainment of James and his brother-in-law Christian IV of Denmark on their visit to the Earl of Salisbury at Theobalds in 1606, has become a touchstone for the indecorum of the Jacobean court; and since the text of the masque does not survive, Harington's letter has in effect become the masque. I am quoting rather more of the account here than usual, since I want to focus on some things that are generally overlooked:

> after dinner the representation of Solomon his temple and the coming of the Queen of Sheba was made, or (as I may better say) was meant to have been made, before their majesties, by device of the Earl of Salisbury and others [note that credit for the 'device' belongs to the patrons, not the poet and architect]. But, alas! [...] The lady who did play the queen's part did carry most precious gifts to both their majesties; but forgetting the steps arising to the canopy, overset her casket into his Danish majesty's lap, and fell at his feet, though I rather think it was in his face. Much was the hurry and confusion. Cloths and napkins were at hand, to make all clean. His majesty then got up, and would dance with the Queen of Sheba; but he fell down and humbled himself before her, and was carried to an inner chamber and laid on a bed of state; which was not a little defiled with the presents of the queen which had been bestowed on his garments, such as wine, cream, jelly, beverage, cakes, spices, and other good matters.

The account continues to tell how most of the speakers bungled their parts through incompetence or drunkenness. King James, moreover – this is worth stressing – was decidedly uncooperative:

> Victory, in bright armor [...] presented a rich sword to the king, who did not accept it, but put it by with his hand; and [...] did endeavor to make suit to the king [...] but after much lamentable utterance,

> she was led away like a silly captive and laid to sleep in the outer steps of the anti-chamber.

Harington concludes that 'I never did see such lack of good order, discretion and sobriety as I have now done' (Nichols, 1828, pp. 72–3).

This is all that survives of a masque embodying King James's most deeply felt persona, the Solomonic monarch, and the only masque recorded from his reign on a biblical subject. He could not have been ignorant of the text. Why did the King refuse the sword of Victory? He must have known it was to be presented. Was he, like Harington, simply so offended by the indecorum that he withdrew from the game? Or was there a deeper meaning that Harington missed, the pacifist King refusing the martial image – was this even perhaps part of the show? What spectators see often differs significantly from what inventors intend.

Here is an example in which the audience refused to play its part. Ben Jonson's masque *Love Restored* was performed on Twelfth Night 1612, in the presence of the King and Prince Henry. The masquers were ten lords, 'the spirits of Court, and flower of men' led by Cupid, and when they went to take out the ladies to dance the revels, John Chamberlain reports, 'beginning with the ladies of Essex and Cranbourne, they were refused, which set an example to the rest, so that the lords were fain to dance alone and make court to one another' (Chamberlain, 1939, p. 328; see Butler 2008, pp. 205–7).

The only way we know about what must have been a real fiasco is from Chamberlain's letter. Jonson's published text is understandably silent about it. Gossip here is of the essence. At this remove, it is very difficult to know what the problem was. The Countess of Essex (who was not yet the notorious divorcée) and Viscountess Cranbourne were sisters, Frances and Catherine Howard, stars of James's court, daughters of the Earl of Suffolk, a powerful and very influential peer. Suffolk apparently was embarrassed by their behaviour, but since the rest of the ladies followed their lead, the problem they perceived cannot have been theirs alone. Martin Butler suggests, plausibly, that the lords, most of whom were Scots, were seen by the Howard ladies as upstarts and insufficiently aristocratic, and if this is correct, the incident gives us a good insight into the limits of protocol and the extent of courtly privilege and independence at such events – Frances Howard was in the process of divorcing her husband to marry one of James's Scots favourites, Robert Carr, created Earl of Somerset in the following year, and she may have been especially touchy about the number of rapidly ennobled Scots at court. But this cannot be the whole story. What happens when the audience refuses to play its part? The work was jointly sponsored by the King

and Prince Henry, and the Scottish masquers were members of their households, favourites and protégés; so the ladies were offending not merely the upstart lords, but their royal patrons as well. One can imagine circumstances in which such behaviour would have been considered deeply disruptive, even perhaps treasonable – like Cordelia's behaviour at the opening of *Lear* – but if we understand Chamberlain correctly (the letter is not entirely legible) all the apologies were directed at the mortified parent, Suffolk; Chamberlain says nothing about the reaction of the King and Prince. In short, the implications of this affair seem more private than public. And yet, the whole point of the masque – any masque – was precisely that public assertion of aristocratic solidarity: everybody joins in the game celebrating the glories of the crown and court. But even the gossips seem to be silent about what happens when they don't. Is this because nothing happens, or is the lacuna simply in our evidence – or in what we must, perforce, treat as evidence?

When King James came to the English throne he placed the theatrical companies under royal patronage because he loved theatre and believed in its efficacy as an attribute of royal authority; and no doubt when the actors, poets, designers and musicians provided court masques celebrating his wisdom and glory, the investment looked like a good one. But in fact, in the period the alliance between court and theatre worked both ways, and theatre, even the theatre of the court masque, is too anarchic to be confined by patronage. Often enough the protection of the crown was interpreted by the participants to be protection *from* the crown. Take, as a final example, the strange case of the Children of the Revels producing plays at the Blackfriars satirizing the King, his favourites and his new Scottish knights. One particularly offensive production, which I have discussed in 'The Spectacles of State', depicted James himself, according to the French ambassador, 'ivre pour le moins une fois le jour' – drunk at least once a day (Orgel, 2002, pp. 71–88). This play so enraged the King that he swore he would never have the company play before him again and would make them 'beg their bread' (Chambers, 1923, p. 500). In fact, the players were back at court within the year: the incident reveals how little we really understand what must have been a very complicated and ambivalent relationship.

Why did the company produce such plays to begin with? They pitted what were apparently the prejudices of the Blackfriars audience against the wishes and authority of their own patron: how was this in their interest? Why did they not anticipate the King's displeasure, or if they did, why were they willing to risk it – what was in it for them? Where was the censor: why did the Lord Chamberlain allow such a production? And surely most baffling of all, why did the King cool down? Consider a

few dates: the play depicting the King drunk was produced in March 1608. The boys next played at court on 1 and 4 January 1609, the Christmas season of the same year. But their *last previous* appearance at court had been in the season of 1604–05: they were not a company that regularly played before the King. The invitation to perform at New Year's 1609 was therefore extraordinary, a mark of special favour. The troupe's insolence had greatly advanced their standing.

What are we to make of all this? James was used to being attacked and insulted to his face by ministers preaching in his chapel, but surely neither he nor the players could have believed that theatrical companies, like preachers, served a higher law. Ben Jonson, characteristically, regretted the fact. He told William Drummond that 'he hath a mind to be a churchman, and so he might have favour to make one sermon to the King, he careth not what thereafter should befall him, for he would not flatter though he saw Death' (Jonson, 1985, p. 602). Like the Children of the Revels, Jonson dreamt of attacking with impunity; and the target of the satire in both cases was not the playhouse audience but the King. In overlooking the players' offence in 1608, James was at the very least acknowledging his own complicity in the fictions of the revels. Queen Elizabeth's players were less fractious and had always been flattering – George Peele in *The Arraignment of Paris* once again gave her the golden apple intended for Venus, Ben Jonson appropriated her wisdom to adjudicate the conclusion of *Every Man Out of His Humour*, *Cynthia's Revels* was a celebration of her court – but she knew well enough that the relationship between the theatre and the crown was always a complex mixture of intimacy and danger, and she knew her own place in it. 'We princes,' she told the Lords and Commons in 1586, in reply to a parliamentary deputation urging the execution of Mary Queen of Scots, 'are set upon stages' – she was not the audience; she was the spectacle (Chamberlain, 1923, p. 242). 'This tragedy was played forty times in open streets and houses.' 'I am Richard II.'

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Part I

The Word of a Prince: Elizabeth Writing

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2
The Queen's Two Hands

Jonathan Gibson

This essay looks at Elizabeth's handwriting, an important part of her self-representation as both Princess and Queen. The development of Elizabeth's script styles has recently been expertly analysed by H. R. Woudhuysen, to whose essay I am heavily indebted. In what follows, I supplement Woudhuysen's investigation by attempting to unpick some key relationships: between Elizabeth's handwriting and that of her brother Edward VI, between her writing when a Princess and a contemporary writing manual by Giovambattista Palatino (a link pointed out here for the first time), and between her writing as Queen and the broader cultural position of italic script.

Like many people in early modern England, Elizabeth wrote in more than one 'hand' (or style of handwriting).[1] This essay looks at four such hands, in two chronologically distinct sets of binary oppositions. The bulk of the essay (section 2) concentrates on Elizabeth's uses of two contrasting italic hands when still a princess, whilst a second, later opposition between two hands (italic and mixed) is briefly analysed as an *envoi* (section 3). Section 1 introduces the essay by providing an account of some of italic's cultural associations.

1. Gendering italic

Commonly in this period, people distinguished between the hands they used on the basis of formality – using a stiffer, more decorative manner when writing manuscripts for presentation to important people and something altogether looser and more slapdash when drafting, writing casual notes to friends and so on. Sometimes, the distinction between the two would involve the use of two distinct scripts – a loose 'secretary hand' (a crabbed and thorny late medieval hand adapted for business

use) for the informal texts, for example, as against a 'set' italic hand (a hand much closer to modern-day script) for formal material.[2] One might expect that for Elizabeth as Queen, such a distinction would map onto the well-known doctrine of 'the King's two bodies' (the 'body politic' and the 'body natural') – in Spenserian terms, the distinction between Elizabeth as Gloriana ('a most royall Queene or Empresse') and as Belphoebe ('a most vertuous and beautifull Lady').[3] I will be arguing, however, that for Elizabeth things were more complicated than this – partly for reasons connected to the cultural meanings associated in Tudor England with one particular script type: italic.

'Italic' script was developed in the fifteenth century (in Italy, as the name implies) in association with a stiffer, more upright form – 'humanistic book script' – as part of a reaction against 'Gothic' hands (medieval writing styles viewed as barbarous and non-classical). Early humanists confected these new scripts in a self-conscious attempt to return to the lucid early medieval hands ('Carolingian minuscule') in which recently unearthed manuscripts of classical texts had been written, mistakenly assuming that these represented the writing style of the ancient Romans. Humanistic hands paired Carolingian minuscule with inscriptional Roman capitals copied from ancient monuments;[4] from these, italic script, a swifter version with fewer pen-lifts and a more extrovert set of flourishes, developed. This style of writing was first used in England in the early sixteenth century by university scholars (Fairbank and Dickins, 1962). As a result, in the Tudor period, italic was a script that had strong associations with classical literature and with education. It also became associated with the aristocracy, as tame humanists taught it in the early sixteenth century to royal and aristocratic children: not just Elizabeth but also her brother Edward, Lady Jane Grey and many other contemporaries (Daybell, 2006, p. 65, n. 19).

The associations of italic in Tudor England were not all positive. The appearance, as the century wore on, of printed handbooks with instructions on how to write popularized italic,[5] but could not hide the fact that it had not succeeded in displacing secretary as the standard, 'cursive' (free-flowing) script of everyday dealings and public administration. Early on in the history of italic in Italy, its so-called *cancellaresca* (chancery) style had been adapted by the papacy as the format in which important correspondence ('briefs') were dispatched.[6] *Cancellaresca*, as described in 1522 by Ludovico degli Arrighi in his influential textbook (Arrighi, 1522; see Ogg, 1953; translated in Osley, 1980, pp. 75–80),

was small in size and swift in execution: it involved many linked letters and few pen-lifts. The main area of English life where such a small, neat, professional, free-flowing hand was practised seems to have been the universities. Everywhere else, day-to-day business continued to be enacted in the Gothic secretary hand. Italic, by contrast, became backed into a peculiar corner: associated not simply with classical literature and élite status but also with (a) scribes and writing-masters (and thus, implicitly, with form rather than content), and (b) with women, for whom the hand was felt particularly apposite – in part, perhaps, because of the emphasis in women's education on the reading and copying of texts rather than on textual composition. English writing-books identify italic as a hand particularly suited for teaching to women because of its easiness – it is felt not to be too taxing for female brains (Daybell, 2006, p. 64; Wolfe, 2009, pp. 27–9). Very neat, non-cursive italic, like the hand used by Elizabeth to write her letters before she became Queen, though prestigious in some contexts (not just the universities, but also professional literary production) therefore seems to have begun to be viewed by some in the later part of the Tudor period with a certain amount of disdain, as a childish, womanish, second-hand skill to be left behind.[7] Hamlet's remembered disdain for fine writing ('I once did hold it as our statists do / A baseness to write fair and laboured much / How to forget that learning' (Shakespeare, 2006, 5.2.33–5)) is of a piece with this view of italic as formal excellence (essentially, decoration) detached from substantive content. Hence, perhaps, the attitude summed up by Elizabeth's Chicago editors: 'As a symbolic mode, Elizabeth's italic can be grouped with other accomplishments of hers – needlework, intricate figure-dancing, the playing of the lute and virginals – as one of the humane arts that graced and expressed the cultivated life that was largely her lot as a child and teenager' (Elizabeth I, 2003, p. xiv; see Calabresi, 2008).

2. The Princess's two hands: the Belmain hand and the Palatino hand

All the writing that survives by Elizabeth from before her accession to the throne is in lucid, painstakingly drawn italic. A high proportion of these texts was designed to show off the Princess's educational accomplishments – both her linguistic skills (in English, Latin, French and Italian) and her abilities as a scribe.[8]

Her first English tutor was William Grindal, who taught her from the winter of 1544 for two years before his death in 1546. Grindal

was replaced by his mentor, the famous Cambridge humanist Roger Ascham, who has frequently been credited with teaching Elizabeth italic. Woudhuysen argues that this is unlikely: 'It is hard not to believe that Ascham's fine italic hand did not have an influence on the young princess's, but he himself does not claim to have taught her to write', he says, adding that 'since he only took responsibility from Grindal's death in January 1548, when she was fourteen, as her hand was already formed, other influences may be detected' (2007, pp. 1–2).

There are, as Woudhuysen has pointed out, two distinct forms of italic hand used by Princess Elizabeth. The earliest letter of Elizabeth's to survive (Figure 2.1), an appeal to Katherine Parr to remember her to King Henry, is in Italian and dates from 31 July 1544, now British Library MS Cotton Otho C.x, f.235 (Elizabeth I, 2000, pp. 5–6; 2003, pp. 5–6 (Letter 1); Pryor, 2003, pp. 16–17 (facsimile)). It is written in the same

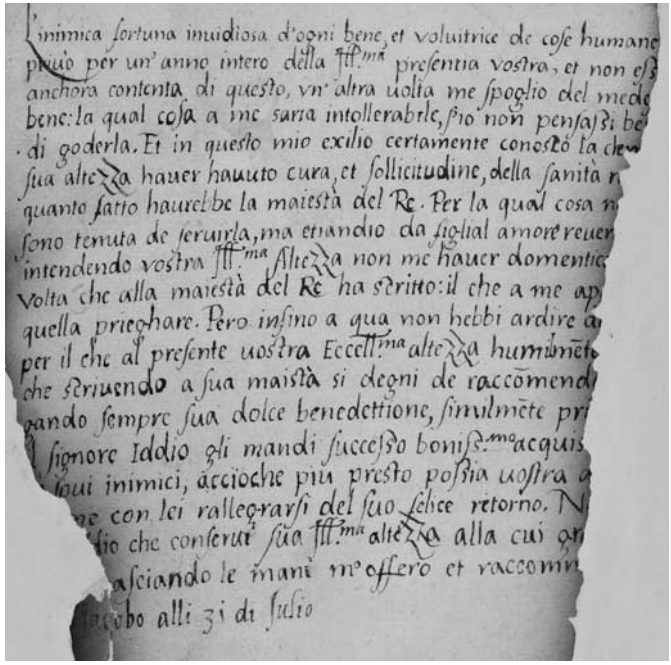
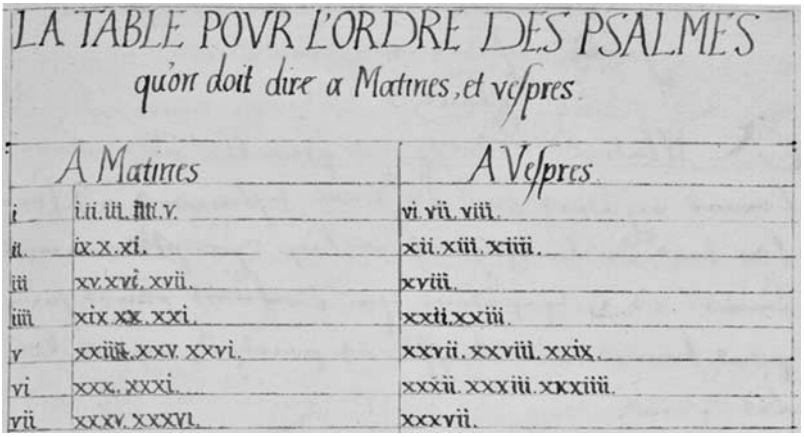


Figure 2.1 Princess Elizabeth's 'Belmain hand' in her first letter (London, British Library MS Cotton Otho C.x., f.235r) © The British Library Board


LA TABLE POVR L'ORDRE DES PSALMES
quon doit dire a Matines, et vespres

	A Matines	A Vespres
i	i.ii.iii.iiii.v.	vi.vii.viii.
ii	ix.x.xi.	xii.xiii.xiiii.
iii	xv.xvi.xvii.	xviii.
iiii	xix.xx.xxi.	xxii.xxiii.
v	xxiiii.xxv.xxvi.	xxvii.xxviii.xxix.
vi	xxx.xxxi.	xxxii.xxxiii.xxxiiii.
vii	xxxv.xxxvi.	xxxvii.

Figure 2.2 Belmain's own hand (London, British Library MS Royal A. xiv, f.llr) © The British Library Board

hand Elizabeth used – in a wider-looking form – for three manuscript translations on parchment dedicated to King Henry and Katherine Parr as New Year's gifts between 1544 and 1546.[9] This rather plain italic hand of Elizabeth's is almost identical to the hand of the Huguenot Jean Belmain (Figure 2.2), who was probably teaching Elizabeth French at the time. Belmain is known to have been French tutor to Elizabeth's brother Prince Edward from 1546 onwards, and it seems highly likely that he had been Elizabeth's French tutor earlier.[10] Unsurprisingly, some of Edward's French manuscripts, like Elizabeth's, use a hand very similar to Belmain's (Figure 2.3). For both Edward and Elizabeth, it seems, learning French with Belmain involved forming one's hand upon his.

In about 1547, Elizabeth started using a new italic hand, quite distinct in letter shape and proportion from her 'Belmain hand' (Figure 2.4). This second hand first appears in a letter to Edward – the first letter to him, apparently, that she ever wrote – that is tentatively assigned to 1547 by the Chicago editors; now British Library, MS Lansdowne 1236, f.33 (Elizabeth I, 2000, pp. 13–14; 2003, pp. 12–13 (Letter 5)). The hand Elizabeth uses for this letter is in all essentials the same as the one she uses for the rest of the letters written by her before her accession to the throne. The script used is a narrower form of italic than that in her Belmain hand. Its letter-forms are also more angular and its ascenders

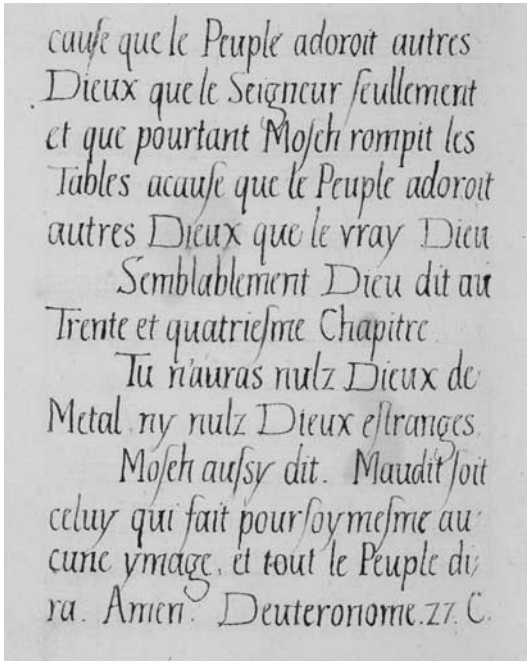

cauſe que le Peuple adoroit autres
Dieux que le Seigneur ſeullement
et que pourtant Moſeh rompit les
Tables acauſe que le Peuple adoroit
autres Dieux que le vray Dieu
Semblablement Dieu dit au
Trente et quatrieſme Chapitre
Tu n'auras nulz Dieux de
Metal ny nulz Dieux eſtranges
Moſeh auſsy dit. Maudit ſoit
celuy qui fait pour ſoy meſme au
cune ymage. et tout le Peuple di
ra. Amen. Deuteronome. 27. C.

Figure 2.3 The Belmain hand as used by Edward (Cambridge, Trinity College, MS R. 7.31, f.6v) © The Master and Fellows of Trinity College Cambridge

and descenders more expansive. There are frequent flourishes, the line looping round decoratively and exuberantly.

As with her Belmain hand, this style of writing (the second italic hand identified by Woudhuysen) was shared by Elizabeth with her brother.[11] Many of Edward's manuscripts were written in a hand using almost identical letter-forms (Figure 2.5). Particularly striking is the fact that Edward used this hand alongside his Belmain hand: in two of his French manuscripts, he writes the main text in his Belmain hand and the dedicatory epistle in the other, rather flashier italic script also shared with his sister.[12] This practice contrasts with Elizabeth's: in the manuscripts she wrote in her Belmain hand (dating between 1544 and 1546), she used the same letter-forms in both epistle and main text. The more decorative italic appears a bit earlier in Edward's manuscripts (around 1545–46) than in Elizabeth's, whilst Edward's use of a Belmain-influenced hand seems to postdate Elizabeth's.[13] Edward was still being taught French by Belmain, so he used it in tandem with his imitation of Belmain's script.

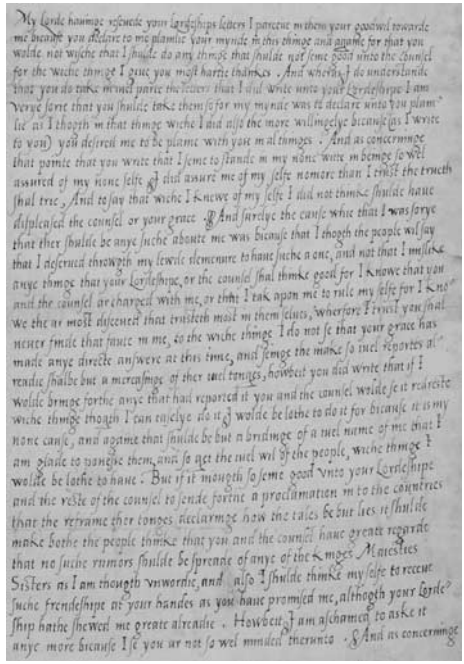
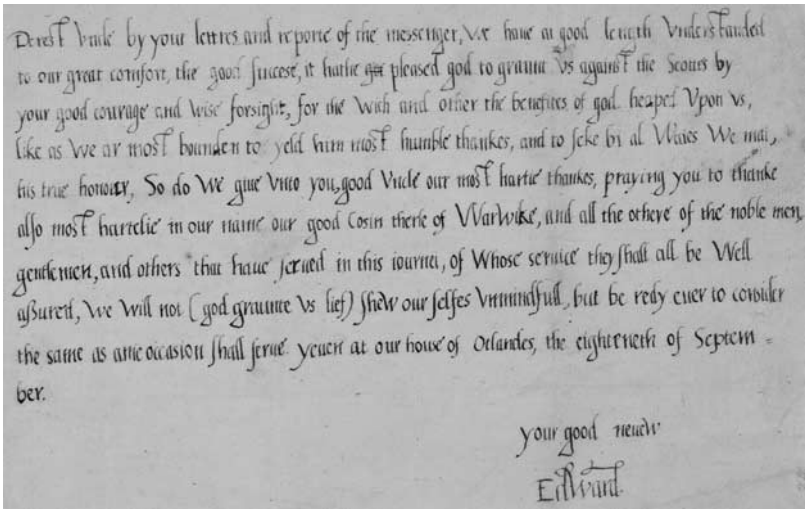


Figure 2.4 The 'Palatino hand' as used by Elizabeth (London, British Library MS Lansdowne 1236, f.33r) © The British Library Board

Elizabeth was not, having moved on to a new curriculum, so she left the Belmain hand behind, concentrating entirely on the newer, more extrovert style of italic.

Who taught Elizabeth and Edward this new script? It is possible that Roger Ascham was involved; he does seem to have taught Edward handwriting (Woudhuysen, 2007, pp. 3–4), although he did not formally take over responsibility for Elizabeth's education till 1548. One of the italic hands he wrote does, in point of fact, have features in common with the new hand of Edward's and Elizabeth's.[14] 1548 is also the date of the copy of a famous printed writing manual known to have belonged to Edward: the *Libro nuovo d'imparare a scrivere tutte sorte lettere* of Giovambattista Palatino, first published in 1540.[15] Sadly, Edward's copy is no longer extant: years ago, it was removed from the royal library as a duplicate (Birrell, 1987, pp. 14, 19, n. 24). Comparison between Palatino's sample alphabets and the manuscripts of Elizabeth and Edward strongly suggest that Edward's ownership of the *Libro nuovo* was connected with his work


Derest Vncle by your letters and reporte of the messenger, We haue an good leneth Vnderstanded to our great comfort, the good Succese, it hathe ~~pleased~~ pleased god to graunte Vs against the Scotes by your good courage and wise forsight, for the Wich and other the benefites of god heaped Vpon vs, like as We ar most bounden to yeld him most humble thankes, and to seke by al Waies We mai, his true honour, So do We giue Vnto you, good Vncle our most hartie thankes, prayeng you to thanke also most harteli in our name our good Cosin therle of VVarWike, and all the other of the noble men, gentlemen, and others that haue serued in this iourney, of Whose seruice they shall all be Well assured, We Will not (god graunte Vs lief) shew our selfes vnmindfull, but be redy euer to consider the same as ame occasion shall serue. yeuen at our house of Orlandes, the eighteneth of Septem - ber.

your good neuew
Edward.

Figure 2.5 The 'Palatino hand' as used by Edward (London, British Library MS Lansdowne 1236, f.16r) © The British Library Board

on the new hand, for there are many parallels between Palatino's letter-forms and those used by Elizabeth and Edward – far more than with either of the two other influential writing-books of the time, Arrighi's *La Operina* (1520) and Giovanantonio Tagliente's *Lo presente libro* (1524).[16] Perhaps Edward started off working from a copy-book provided by his teacher, only getting hold of a copy of Palatino's manual – the inspiration for his teacher's copy-book – later, in or after 1548.

Palatino provides alphabets for various forms of *cancellaresca* script in *Il Libro nuovo*: as well as his standard (or *corsiva*) form, he includes a stunted 'set' form (*formata*), and – though only in editions from 1545 onwards – extra *cancellaresca* alphabets headed *romana* and *romana bastarda*. Edward and Elizabeth seem to mix and match minuscules from the *romana* and *romana bastarda* forms: either they or their preceptor have been making a selection from Palatino's models. Elizabeth's letters (Figure 2.4) by and large follow Palatino's *romana* forms (Figure 2.6), though there are exceptions: her double-bowled 'g', for example, is closer to a 'g' in Palatino's *romana bastarda*. The fact that Edward's selection of forms is slightly different perhaps suggests that personal preference on the part of the writer played a role – or perhaps this is a function of his having learnt the script a couple of years earlier than Elizabeth.[17] Both Edward and Elizabeth seem to have followed Palatino's directions for writing minuscules. He describes most letters



Figure 2.6 Palatino's *Cancelleresca romana* alphabet from the *Libro nuovo* (Ogg, 1953, p. 156)

as being constructed out of three strokes (Ogg, 1953, p. 56): a horizontal stroke at the top of the letter-block (*testa*), a vertical stroke down (*traverso*) and a thin diagonal rising to the right (*taglio*). It is clear from looking at Edward's and Elizabeth's manuscripts that they followed this rather simplistic model rather more thorough-goingly than Palatino did himself. The result is that the script tends to sharpness and angularity. These characteristics are emphasized by Edward's and Elizabeth's fidelity to the letter proportions stipulated by Palatino. Unlike the other early writing-masters who produced printed manuals, Palatino advocated for single-unit letters such as 'a', 'n' and 'o' a ratio of 1 (width): 2 (height), making them twice as tall as they are wide. This ratio produced a narrower script than the one advocated by Arrighi and Tagliente, which was closer to 2:3. A. S. Osley's comment is pertinent to Edward's and Elizabeth's manuscripts: 'this was a fundamental change. It leaves much less room for diagonal strokes; they have to be made at a sharper angle, thus increasing their width relative to the horizontal and vertical strokes. There is a considerable risk that the letters will be too sharp or

angular, producing a zig-zag or saw-edge effect' (1979, p. 81). In James Wardrop's opinion, Palatino's handbook had the effect of stultifying and slowing down *cancellaresca*, however splendid his writing was calligraphically: 'Palatino's "chancery" is a failure as handwriting;' he claims, 'as lettering it is superb' (1963, p. 19). In hands such as Elizabeth's and Edward's, italic almost entirely lost the cursivity that had originally been its defining characteristic.[18]

Perhaps the most telling evidence for a link between Palatino, Edward and Elizabeth (possibly mediated *via* a teacher's copybook) is their shared use of particular types of flourish on capital letters. The printed manuals did not provide instructions on how to write capital letters as they did for minuscules. Instead, in Osley's words, 'Writing masters usually took this opportunity to display their individual skill, élan, and inventions' (1979, p. 86): they simply printed a page of sample capitals, flourished in their own particular way. Many of the flourishes on Elizabeth's and Edward's capital letters clearly derive from Palatino's. Elizabeth, in particular, has a penchant for playing fantastical riffs on Palatino's ornamentations. The shapes of her simpler flourished 'A's, for instance (Figure 2.4, line 4 and bottom line) are obviously derived from Palatino (Figure 2.7), whilst her 'I' (Figure 2.4, penultimate line) adds to Palatino's model (Figure 2.7) a flourish identical to that on his 'A' and the more complex 'A' (Figure 2.4, line 12) doubles the same effect.[19] In the manuscripts of his that were presented to other people (letters, fair copy compositions), Edward is pretty conservative about doing this. He is less guarded in some of his notebooks, though the decoration there often seems arbitrary and ill-thought-through compared with Elizabeth's. In general, in fact, Elizabeth's Palatino hand is more regular and better constructed than Edward's – not surprising in view of her greater age. Elizabeth's use of the Palatino hand is at its most impressive and controlled in the latest of her schoolgirl translations on parchment to survive: her version of Bernardo Ochino's *Sermo de Christo*. This manuscript was clearly written some years after the translations of 1544–46, as it has completely left the Belmain hand behind. The choice of an Italian, as opposed to a French source text is significant too: as Woudhuysen says, the manuscript demonstrates 'an unmistakable move away from her old French master, some calligraphic mastery, and considerable skill' (2007, p. 111). Elizabeth seems here to be following Palatino's *cancellaresca formata* letter forms.

If Ascham was not directly responsible for teaching Elizabeth her Palatino hand, another possible candidate is Giovambattista Castiglione, an Italian who had been introduced to Henry VIII at the



Figure 2.7 Model capitals from Palatino's *Libro nuovo* (Ogg, 1953, p. 153)

siege of Boulogne in 1544 and who is known to have taught the princess Italian at some unspecified time a little later. He was imprisoned on religious grounds several times in Mary's reign, carried messages for Elizabeth when she was imprisoned, and was given a court position when Elizabeth became Queen (Wyatt, 2005, pp. 125–6). He has proved elusive to scholars in the past as a result of anglicizing his name to 'John Baptist Castillion'.[20] Under this name, there are extant at the Surrey History Centre in Woking four letters from Castiglione to Sir John More. They are not in italic, but the signature is, and uses flourishes of the Palatino kind (Loseley MSS 6729/1/31 and 6729/7/53, 54, 55 (1 and 2)). Some rather more interesting texts by Castiglione – carved by him in the Salt Tower of the Tower of London – are less informative palaeographically.

One of the best known theoretical discussions of the italic hand in Renaissance England is Jonathan Goldberg's *Writing Matters* (1990). Goldberg lays great stress on the capacity of italic – through the means of writing manuals and writing masters – to impose itself on its writer,

to 'discipline' tyro scribes (whether royal or not), instilling submission to established power structures. As Harold Love has pointed out, this argument seems a bit exaggerated: it was not general practice for everyone learning italic to conform to a particular norm, slavishly tying their own hand to the letter-forms of someone else's, even though the copying of letters written out by a teacher was a necessary first step (1995, p. 108; see also Sanders, 1998, pp. 144–5). Edward's and Elizabeth's two italics present an intriguingly varied picture: one – the Belmain script – can indeed be read as a disciplinary, unifying force, subordinating the individuality of Edward and Elizabeth to the service of pious translated texts (and thus, more broadly, of evangelical religion). The other hand, though – the Palatino hand perhaps taught Elizabeth by Castiglione and used largely for original composition – seems to have been designed from the start as something inviting variation and customization, picking and choosing – most strikingly in Elizabeth's development of the patterns of Palatino's flourishes. This hand of Elizabeth's childhood, and its potential for customization, had an interesting afterlife during Elizabeth's reign, to which I will shortly turn.

3. The Queen's two hands: the Palatino hand and the skrating hand

When Elizabeth became Queen, she needed to write a great deal, and at high speed. The obvious way to accommodate this requirement would have been to speed up her italic, letter-writing hand. This is what, for example, both her brother Edward and Mary Queen of Scots did. The results of this strategy can be unhappy, and are in Edward's and Mary's cases: all balance and symmetry is lost and the hand declines into crude childishness.[21] Instead, Elizabeth produced a notorious, spidery, synthetic hand (Figure 2.8) – a mixture of skewed italic forms with bits of secretary (the business hand of her country) – a hand she referred jokingly to as 'her skrating hand' in a letter to James VI of Scotland.[22] In Woudhuysen's words:

> The exact later development of Elizabeth's hand is not easy to reconstruct. What seems to have happened is that at some point, probably due to the pressure of government and business, she developed a much more informal cursive mixed italic and secretary hand. This co-existed with her formal italic hand, especially in signatures, subscriptions, and postscripts, but eventually the looser style of writing took over more or less completely. (2007, p. 13)

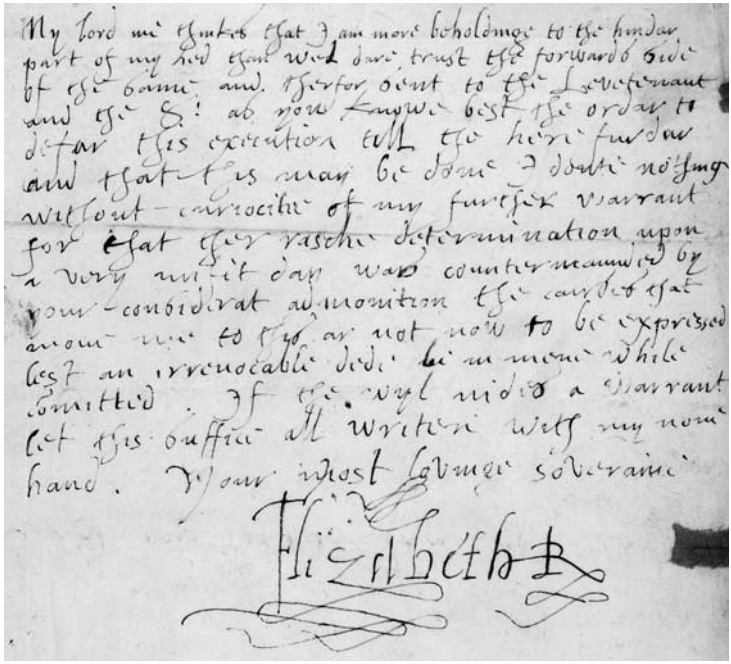


Figure 2.8 Elizabeth's 'skrating' hand and her signature (Oxford: Bodleian Library MS Ashmole 1729, f.13) © The Bodleian Library, University of Oxford

Disease in her fingers perhaps helped contribute to the increasingly wild and tottery nature of this hand. The initial impulse behind it was, though, I think, to avoid the overtones of babyishness which some were increasingly beginning to feel 'womanly' italic carried – to construct a new hand expressive of her new role as monarch ('Prince' as much as 'Queen'), to banish the dependency implied by her neat, Princess's italic. She ended up wreaking considerable violence on the letter forms she used, influencing a generation of courtiers towards making their own script rough and unpretty. The violence is even implicit in her joky name for the hand. The verb 'scrat' is defined by the OED as 'To use the nails or claws for attack; to scratch (*at* a person)'. In Elizabeth's use of 'scrating' there is perhaps a submerged pun on 'secretary' (as in the 'secretary' script she was deforming): dutiful scribe turns into wild beast.

But still the hand in which she had written letters as a teenager persisted throughout her life, in her signature and, occasionally, in her subscription (the Renaissance equivalent of 'yours faithfully' just before

the signature), in startling contrast to the rest of the letter, whether it was written out by a scribe or by Elizabeth herself in 'skrating' mode. That she did this was something of an eccentricity. As Felix Pryor has pointed out, no other Tudor monarch lavished so much attention on every occurrence of the royal signature (2003, p. 14). Henry VIII, for example, authorized the use of a stamp – a mechanical reproduction of his signature. Often these late italic subscriptions of Elizabeth's, written in the hand of her youth, add a friendly, personal touch to an official, scribally-produced letter. At the same time, of course, the grand 'Elizabeth R' signature is a forceful affirmation of Elizabeth's royal status (the equivalent of the great seal; Figure 2.8).[23] The shapes of that intimidating signature, however, have their origin in the same place as do the other elements in Elizabeth's formal italic hand: Palatino's *Libro nuovo*, the handwriting manual of her childhood. Elizabeth clearly derived the famous flourish supporting her signature from the enormous ampersand in the bottom right corner of Palatino's sample capitals (Figure 2.7). It is surely not coincidental that this ampersand in Palatino is on the same



Figure 2.9 Extract from Palatino: abbreviations (Ogg, 1953, p. 154)

line as his final sample capital letter – in both textbook and royal signature this flourish is an outgrowth of a 'z'. I think Elizabeth also derived the shape of the famous 'R' in her signature from Palatino, appropriately enough from a page of abbreviations (Figure 2.9, three lines from the bottom).[24] Neither of the two decorated 'R's in the *Libro nuovo* she seems to have started from stood for 'Regina', of course – the words they point to, though (not insignificantly, perhaps, in male form), are just as elevated: 'reverendissimo' and 'rarissimo'.

As this last example shows, there is no easy way in which we can map the distinction between Elizabeth's hands onto the distinction between her 'public' and 'private' identities (or, put in other terms, the distinction between the Queen's two bodies). The operations of the conventions of Renaissance hand-writing are much more complicated, much more subtle and much more demanding of future research than that.

Notes

1. My use of the terms 'hand' and 'script' in this essay attempts to observe the distinction made by Peter Beal: 'Although the term "hand" is often used as a synonym of "script", it usually has the connotation of a particular person's handwriting. Thus the handwriting on a document may conform to a certain script – its style, forms, and general characteristics belonging to a historical period or recognized generic type of writing (court, secretary, italic etc.) – but it is the hand that has the peculiar distinguishing features and personal idiosyncrasies reflecting the character or identity of the writer as an individual' (Beal, 2008, pp. 183–4).
2. Or *vice versa*: say, a rough and ready italic in informal uses contrasted with a formal secretary, or, more simply, differentiation between formal and informal versions of the same script, whether secretary or italic. Increasingly popular in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries were various types of 'mixed hand' (combining letter forms from both italic and secretary scripts), at first largely in informal uses, later on also used formally, and gradually evolving into the seventeenth-century script known as 'round hand'. For a general survey of handwriting in this period, with sample facsimiles, see Preston and Yeandle, 1999.
3. As expressed in the letter to Raleigh appended to the 1590 edition of *The Faerie Queene* (Spenser, 2001, p. 716). For recent applications of this idea to Elizabeth's self-representation, see the essay by Paola Baseotto in this book and Sharpe, 2009, part VI.
4. These Roman capitals were often ornamented with curlicues similar to those used in non-Italic hands. Humanistic Italian hands of the fifteenth century have been much studied: see for example Wardrop, 1963. My use of the term 'Italic' to identify both these hands and those descending from them over the following two centuries is a drastic over-simplification of a terminological morass: for recent attempts to sort out some of the key distinctions

between 'Italian', 'Italic' and 'Roman', see the relevant entries in Beal, 2008 and Wolfe, 2009, pp. 21–3.

5. The first English manual was *A booke containing divers sortes of hands* by Jean de Beauchesne and John Baildon (London, 1570), an adaptation of a 1550 French manual (Osley 1980, pp. 227–40). For English writing-masters, see Heal, 1931.
6. Not to be confused with earlier types of hand used in medieval chanceries, in England and elsewhere, also sometimes referred to as *cancellaresca* (Beal, 2008, p. 69).
7. This shift in prestige (Sanders, 1998, ch. 5; Daybell, 2006, pp. 65–6) presumably marked the point at which very neat handwriting became particularly associated with women – a convention now that seems almost to have attained the status of a cultural universal. Throughout the period, some noblemen wrote solely in italic. Increasingly, though, aristocratic writers worked in a rough, informal italic, clearly in part to differentiate their own writing from material in the hands of their scribes.
8. As a marriageable asset, if Frances Teague is to be believed (Teague, 2003).
9. *The glasse of the synnefull soule*, the English translation of a long religious poem by Marguerite de Navarre (Elizabeth I, 1993 (facsimile); 2009, pp. 23–125), presented to Katherine at New Year 1544/5, her multi-lingual translation for Henry, in 1545/6, of Katherine's printed book *Prayers and Medytacions* (Elizabeth I, 2009, pp. 127–99), and a translation of the first chapter from Calvin's *Institutes* presented to Katherine, also in 1545/6 (Elizabeth I, 2009, 201–97). It seems likely that Elizabeth's now lost translation of Erasmus's colloquy on faith into French made for Henry (Rye, 1865, p. 171) would have had the same appearance: this might have been the companion piece for the 'Mirror' in 1544/5.
10. For the deduction that Belmain taught Elizabeth before (and perhaps also after) his time with Edward, see Kipling, 2004. For a recent summary of Edward's education, which was overseen by John Cheke and Richard Cox, see Hoak, 2004. For comparisons between Belmain's and Elizabeth's hand, illustrated with facsimiles, see Elizabeth I, 2003, pp. xiv–xvii and Woudhuysen, 2007, pp. 10–12. Belmain's hand slopes more and has more consistency than Elizabeth's – looked at individually, the designs of the letters are very similar.
11. The relationship between the two siblings' hands is not directly addressed either by the editors of the Chicago edition of the Collected Works or in Woudhuysen's essay. Bodleian Library MS Autogr.e.2, a manuscript of Edward's schoolwork, has long been thought to have included material by Elizabeth, an attribution with which Woudhuysen concurs (Woudhuysen, 2007, p. 4). The most detailed analysis of Edward's manuscripts is in Needham, 1971, now supplemented by valuable material in MacCulloch, 2000 and Hoak, 2004.
12. Trinity College, Cambridge MS R.7.31, a collection of sentences attacking idolatry (available in facsimile on the University of Cambridge 'Scriptorium' website at http://scriptorium.english.cam.ac.uk/) and Cambridge University Library, MS Dd.xii.59, Edward's treatise against the Pope (discussed in MacCulloch, 2000, pp. 127–8). Both evangelical compositions are dedicated to Somerset.

13. J. G. Nichols assigns a letter by Edward in his Palatino hand dated 2 November to 1545 (Edward VI, 1857, vol. 1, letter II; British Library, MS Cotton Nero C.x, f.7). The earliest copies of letters to which Edward himself assigned a year (Edward VI 1857, vol. 1, letters V, VI–IX, XI–XII) appear in British Library MS Harley 5087, a fair copy reference manuscript (in a very neat Palatino hand) that might not have been started until some time after the letters were sent, and which Hoak (2004) suggests could have been written by Ascham rather than Edward. Therefore the earliest confirmed date for a manuscript in Edward's Palatino hand that I am aware of is 24 May 1546, the date of a holograph letter in British Library MS Cotton Vespasian F.III, f.18 (Edward VI 1857, vol. 1, letter 13).
14. As, for example, in the manuscript of 1545/6 illustrated in Fairbank and Dickins, 1962, plate 4 (National Archives SP1/214, f.54r). Pryor calls Elizabeth's second italic hand 'the Cambridge italic' (2003, p. 41), linking it to Ascham and Cheke.
15. As Hoak notes (2004). Palatino's book is reprinted from the 1561 edition in Ogg, 1953 and partially translated in Osley, 1980, who registers the key differences between the various editions.
16. Both these other books continued to be reprinted beyond the period of Edward's ownership of Palatino's text: see the bibliography compiled by A. F. Johnson in Ogg, 1953, and, for later Italian writing-books, Osley, 1972. The precursor of these manuals, Sigismondo Fanti's *Theoria et Pratica* (1514), did not include illustrations of letter-forms and so cannot enter into the comparison (Osley, 1980, pp. 46–55). For Palatino, see Wardrop, 1952; Osley, 1972; Osley, 1980, pp. 83–96. Wardrop links Elizabeth to Palatino in a very general way, without suggesting that she had direct knowledge of his book (1963, p. 38; see Wardrop, 1952, p. 20). In the words of Birrell, who was the first to notice the significance of Edward's ownership of a copy of Palatino, 'James Wardrop has suggested that the influence of Palatino on English italic hand was in the reign of Elizabeth I, and thus belated and probably indirect. The presence of a relatively early edition in the library of Edward VI would seem to contradict this' (1987, p. 14). Similar hands, also influenced by Palatino, were written by other contemporaries of Edward and Elizabeth, including Lady Jane Grey.
17. Edward's and Elizabeth's 'w's and 'v's have no precedent in Palatino as he did not include these letters in his alphabets. There is only space here to present the sketchiest account of the relationship of Edward's and Elizabeth's hands to Palatino's models and no space at all to investigate the evolution of the Palatino hand across the two siblings' manuscripts. Some of the development in Elizabeth's Palatino hand is described in Woudhuysen, 2007.
18. Palatino's influence is clearly behind the fact that the dominant style written by late sixteenth-century English women was 'a non-cursive italic script' (Wolfe, 2009, p. 31).
19. Both Elizabeth and Edward also occasionally draw large circles in capital letters ('Q' and 'G', for example) as spirals. Not derived from Palatino, I think this is a homage to Ascham, who sometimes uses this form in an italic hand more cursive than the Palatino hand; see, for example, Fairbank and Dickins, 1962, plate 5a (London, British Library, MS Lansdowne 2, n. 16, f.44r), a manuscript of 1547.

20. 'In contrast to Belmain [. . .] no specimen of the hand of her Italian tutor Giovanni Battista Castiglione, has come to light' (Woudhuysen, 2007, p. 3).
21. For example, in Edward's extraordinary 'chronicle' of his own times, in British Library, MS Cotton Nero C.x (Edward VI, 1966).
22. Hatfield House, Cecil Papers, 76/97 (Pryor, 2003, pp. 128–9 (facsimile)).
23. Pryor prints a sequence of facsimiles of Elizabeth's signature (2003, pp. 12–13), showing that it gradually increased in size.
24. Elizabeth's 'R' replaced a symbol of uncertain significance that she appended to her pre-accession signature, possibly derived from Henry VIII's signature (Woudhuysen, 2007, p. 6).

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3

Mary Stuart's Execution and Queen Elizabeth's Divided Self

Paola Baseotto

The present study examines Queen Elizabeth's self-representation in the difficult years preceding and following the execution of Mary Queen of Scots in 1587 through a reading of her 1586 speeches to Parliament, her *Proclamation* of Mary's death sentence and her letters to James VI of Scotland. It is my view that these documents offer illuminating examples of Elizabeth's exploitation of the metaphor of the 'king's two bodies' and of contemporary expectations about her feminine 'body natural' within the framework of her strategies of power and her self-fashioning as a woman and monarch.

Invoking God's assistance 'to be the minister of His heavenly will in this office now committed' to her, Elizabeth reflects that she is 'but one body naturally considered, though by His permission a body politic to govern' (Elizabeth I, 2000, p. 52). This passage from Elizabeth's accession speech at Hatfield documents her early appropriation of the 'mystic fiction of the "King's Two Bodies"' (Kantorowicz, 1957, p. 3), a body 'natural' with its inherent imperfections and a 'body politique [...] utterly void of such imperfections' (Plowden, 1650, p. 134). According to this popular doctrine, 'the virtuous king was he who harmonized his natural to his mystical body, who subjected his passions to his reason, and so through his own example of wholeness applied holistic medicine to the body politic' (Sharpe, 1993, p. 80). In the case of Elizabeth, a major impediment seemed to hinder the desired harmonization of natural and mystical, private and public bodies: her 'body natural' was that of a woman in an age characterized by almost general agreement on woman's congenital weaknesses, affecting body and mind, that exposed her to excesses of passion, made her unfit for autonomous political action and in need of male guidance.[1]

Even a cursory glance at the writings of popular Elizabethan theologians, jurists, moralists and physicians confirms the commonplace quality of the idea of woman's inferiority based on scriptural passages, natural law and writings by undisputed authorities such as Aristotle. The *Seconde Tome of Homilies*, a collection of sermons published in 1563 upon royal authorization, to be read throughout England for the instruction of the entire population during compulsory church attendance, stated that woman is 'a weake creature [...] prone to all weake affections and dispositions of minde' (Jewel, 1563, p. 244). In the light of this general view of woman's inferiority with regard to her physical, psychological and emotional make-up, entailing of necessity her social and political subordination, the abundance and vehemence of writings denouncing woman's rule are not surprising. In his very popular tract *The First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous regiment of women* the Scottish Presbyterian John Knox argues that women rulers should be removed from 'honor and authoritie' and their officers should receive 'the sentence of deathe' (Knox, 1558, sig.53v). Even the few who rose to the defence of women rulers, like John Aylmer, assume the general view of female deficiencies, depicting women as 'weake in nature, feeble in bodie, softe in courage, vnskilfull in practise' (1559, sig.B2v). Aylmer's vindication of female rule, commissioned by Elizabeth's government as an answer to the *First Blast,* is based on such arguments as divine will, 'when God chuseth him selfe by sending to a king [...] no heires male', and the role of Parliament: 'it is not in England so daungerous a matter, to haue a woman ruler [...]. For first it is not she that ruleth [...]. She maketh no statutes or lawes, but the honerable court of Parliament' (Aylmer, 1559, sigs B3, H3v). Despite repressive instruments like the Bill against Slanderous and Seditious Words and Rumours which made criticism of the Queen a risky enterprise, many examples of such criticism by common people as well as prominent members of Elizabeth's entourage are found in State Papers (Levin 1998, 1994, pp. 89, 152).

The theory of the 'king's two bodies' was of service to English people striving to accept the idea of a female monarch in that it allowed them to view Elizabeth as their 'King'.[2] Levin quotes two representative instances of such use: in a private letter the Earl of Shrewsbury urged his son to be 'faithful, loyal, and serviceable to the Queen's Majesty' who 'under God, [is] King of Kings and Lord of Lords' and Nicholas Heath, Archbishop of York, stated that by the 'appointment of God' Elizabeth '[is] our sovaraigne lord and ladie, our kinge and quene' (cited in Levin, 1994, pp. 123, 121).

Elizabeth's not infrequent references to herself as 'prince' or 'king', not 'princess' or 'queen', are to be read in the perspective of her lifelong effort at managing the sensitive issue of her sex. We have abundant documentary evidence of three main strategies adopted by the Queen according to circumstances: appropriation of Renaissance clichés regarding women; ascription to herself of masculine qualities; and reference to the masculinity of her mystical body. It should be noticed that at times she conflates these strategies by first repeating commonplaces about feminine frailties with reference to herself only to draw attention promptly to her masculine strengths or to the fact that, as a monarch, she possesses a masculine mystical body.

The collection of prayers by Elizabeth, a corpus which has received little critical attention, offers many examples of the Queen's exposition of current views of womankind qualified by references to herself as an exception by virtue of her personal qualities or the qualities proper to her mystical body. Elizabeth prays God to lend his 'power and help' to her who, despite her 'unwarlike sex and feminine nature', is called to rule God's 'kingdoms of England and Ireland' (Elizabeth I, 2000, p. 142). Other prayers, however, correct this humble attitude as the Queen proudly lists her physical and intellectual gifts:

> Indeed, I am unimpaired in body, with a good form, a healthy and substantial wit, prudence even beyond other women, and beyond this, distinguished and superior in the knowledge and use of literature and languages, which is highly esteemed because unusual in my sex. Finally, I have been endowed with all royal qualities and with gifts worthy of a kingdom, and have been given these freely by Thee. (Elizabeth I, 2000, p. 141)

A devotional piece documents Elizabeth's acknowledgement of the share in feminine weaknesses of her 'body natural' and her gratitude for the store of masculine qualities she possesses as God's anointed Queen: 'Thou hast done me so special and so rare a mercy that, being a woman by my nature weak, timid, and delicate, as are all women, Thou hast caused me to be vigorous, brave, and strong' (Elizabeth I, 2000, p. 157).

Elizabeth sometimes remarks that she compares favourably to men, indeed, to kings. In her reply to a petition by Commons that she marry, she warns 'though I be a woman, yet I have as good a courage answerable to my place as ever my father had' (Elizabeth I, 2000, p. 97). An often quoted remark functions as Elizabeth's portrayal of her own two bodies: 'I know I have the body but of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the

heart and stomach of a king and of a king of England too' (Elizabeth I, 2000, p. 296). It shall be noticed that Elizabeth often appropriates a male subjectivity as 'prince' or 'king' in her letters to James VI especially when she wants to emphasize her supremacy as ruler of a powerful nation. Hence for example in November 1585 in response to James's protests regarding England's backing of a coup against his favourite, the Earl of Arran, the Queen urges James to judge of her 'as of a king that carries no abject nature' and who is ready to protect Scotland along with its monarch (Elizabeth I, 2000, p. 267).

Another strategy, and one deserving more critical attention than it has received so far, is Elizabeth's skilful exploitation of gender stereotypes when she manipulates expectations about her behaviour to various ends. Sometimes she uses this strategy quite plainly with the aim to encourage acceptance of her power and authoritarian personality, as when in an answer to a Commons petition in 1563 she adopts a self-effacing stance: 'The weight and greatness of this matter might cause in me, being a woman wanting both wit and memory, some fear to speak, and bashfulness besides, a thing appropriate to my sex' (Elizabeth I, 2000, p. 70). The Queen, who was well aware of wanting neither 'wit' nor 'memory' and who, thanks to her excellent grounding in eloquence, was a very effective speaker, seems to act on one of her mottoes, 'video et taceo'.[3] A year later, addressing the academic community of Cambridge University, she again feigns conformity to the behaviour thought suitable for women who were expected to be modest and silent, refraining especially from speaking in public in compliance with the Pauline injunction in Timothy I. In the prologue to her oration she refers to her 'feminine modesty' as a deterrent 'from making a speech' (Elizabeth I, 1966, p. 71). In fact, throughout her long reign the Queen proved to be, often to the exasperation of her councillors and Parliament, the opposite of a silent and submissive woman.

At other times Elizabeth uses this strategy in a more complex way to more crucial ends. A highly significant instance of Elizabeth's capitalization on gender expectations is worth detailed analysis. Elizabeth makes skilful use of this strategy when she turns the liability of her sex into a powerful instrument serviceable to her conscious effort to rewrite her role in the Anglo-Scottish crisis by distancing herself from Mary Stuart's execution. In so doing, she strengthens her league with Scotland thereby ensuring a peaceful future for Britain through the union of England and Scotland.

Elizabeth's strategy is clearly readable in her personal correspondence with James VI initiated in the mid 1580s, a critical period in English

history. As Elizabeth aged, making the prospect of marriage unrealistic, the question of succession to the English throne became ever more urgent. Despite Parliament's recurrent and vehement appeals that Elizabeth nominate a heir, she had always firmly declined to do so pointing to the dangers for Queen and country of such nomination; in Elizabeth's words, 'At this present, it is not convenient, nor never shall be without some peril unto you and certain danger unto me' (Elizabeth I, 2000, p. 97). Such was Elizabeth's sensitivity to the question of succession, that the 1581 Statute of Silence made discussion of the rights of heirs to the English throne punishable by death.

A further national crisis produced popular unrest and tension between Elizabeth and her Parliament. The uncovering of Parry's conspiracy, the last in a series of plots to assassinate Elizabeth and offer the English crown to the Catholic Mary Stuart, a prisoner in England since her flight from Scotland as a deposed Queen in 1568, had occasioned Mary's transfer from lenient to strict custody (Wormald, 1988). Parliamentary petitions to Elizabeth for permission to commit Mary for trial came after years of popular and Council calls for Mary's blood. Finally, the long feared Spanish invasion of England seemed inevitable now following Elizabeth's signing of an alliance with the Dutch rebels, the Nonsuch Treaty of 1585.

In the light of the particular difficulties of the moment, it is easy to discern Elizabeth's and James's motives for initiating a personal correspondence after years of exchanges of messages through ambassadors and official letters. While for twenty years during James's minority Elizabeth had viewed Scotland 'as something less than a sovereign power, little more than a colony' (MacCaffrey, 1992, p. 305), in the mid 1580s a new reality called for a change of policy. After a long regency since his coronation thirteen months after his birth, James had finally managed to establish royal control, hence Elizabeth's interlocutor in Scotland was now a sovereign prince. In the wake of what seemed an inevitable war with Spain, James's neutrality and resistance to Spanish wheedling were high on Elizabeth's agenda, as Scotland could easily function as a gateway to England. Elizabeth initiated her personal correspondence with James to further her proposal for an Anglo-Scottish alliance against foreign invasion. Moreover, in view of what seemed the speedy approach of a final, dramatic reckoning in relation to Mary Queen of Scots, Elizabeth needed to work on her rival's son in order to avert a major Anglo-Scottish crisis inviting French or Spanish intervention.

James's motivations for a frequent exchange of warm letters with Elizabeth are no less transparent. His primary concern, as documented by some open references and many veiled hints in his letters, is his claim to the English throne. While his writings abound in statements regarding his 'undoubted right' as Elizabeth's lawful heir 'by lineal descent' and references to himself, for instance in an important letter to Robert Cecil a year before Elizabeth's death, as 'a lawful, natural and loving successor to your queen and country', his future as King of England was far from secure (James VI/I, 1984, pp. 186, 194, letters to Henry Percy, April 1602, and to Robert Cecil, 3 June 1602). On the basis of Henry VIII's will, statute law left the succession to the Grey line and common law excluded people born outside England. Legal considerations in addition to Elizabeth's stubborn silence on the issue of succession roused James's anxiety and evidence of his frustration recurs throughout the impressive number of his letters to various addressees and are behind some rash attempts at securing the support of the likes of Essex. In fact, James appeared to many as Elizabeth's most likely successor, especially after the Queen had obtained from a reluctant Parliament an agreement that a bill excluding Mary and her heirs from succession would not prejudice James's claim. This episode might be responsible for Cecil's decision in 1601 to enter into a secret correspondence with James which documents his role in the careful preparation of James's undisputed accession to the English throne in 1603. However, by stubbornly refusing to name him openly as her heir, Elizabeth gained immense bargaining power over James. Finally, a minor motivation – yet one that becomes a leitmotif in his letters to Elizabeth – for James's interest in close relations with England, was an annual subsidy, a welcome addition to James's income but above all, as MacCaffrey argues, a 'symbol of his special relation to the English crown and an oblique acknowledgment of his rights as heir' (MacCaffrey, 1992, p. 322).

The Elizabeth–James personal correspondence, consisting mostly of holographs (letters written in their own hands), starts with exchanges characterized by conventional kinship language in line with the practice of royal families in Renaissance Europe. Elizabeth addresses her first letters to the 'Right highe right excellent and mightie prince, and deerest brother and cosin' and signs 'your verey lovinge sistar and cousin'; James uses the address 'Madam and dearest sister' and signs 'your maist loving and affectionat brother and cousing' (Elizabeth I and James VI/I, 1849, pp. 2–5). As the political expediency of an Anglo-Scottish league, intended to cross Catholic designs on England and pave the way for a

peaceful transition of power upon Elizabeth's death with the union of the two neighbouring kingdoms, becomes more visible, the language of kinship acquires unprecedented intensity with the more and more frequent introduction of lexical markers of affection in the body of the letters and the growing presence of references to feelings of friendship and love between the two monarchs and their two kingdoms. The discourse of the affective bond and great friendship of Elizabeth and James which generate a political alliance between England and Scotland is a leitmotif of the entire correspondence. Lexical markers of the friendship theme are often combined with markers of affection to suggest the idea of affection, not realpolitik, as the basis of the Anglo-Scottish relation. Hence Elizabeth assures James of 'the care we have of your person', 'our professed frendship and good will towards youe', 'our synceare well meaning' (Elizabeth I and James VI/I, 1849, pp. 23, 2); she goes so far as to maintain that she cares for James as much as for herself: 'meaning you no less good than I pray God ever to afford me' (Elizabeth I, 2000, p. 269). Elizabeth's affection extends from James to Scotland: she expresses hopes that her friendship with James will send out its 'hotest beames to the kindeling of the entier affection of bothe realmes' (Elizabeth I and James VI/I, 1849, p. 19).

James adopts the same attitude and emphasizes the intensity and uniqueness of their relationship: he refers to himself as 'him quho is most deuoted to you of any prince in cristendom', defines Elizabeth as his '*alter ego*', and expresses gratitude for her tokens of 'inuard freindship' (Elizabeth I and James VI/I, 1849, pp. 21, 15). By virtue of 'nearness of blood, bound up with so many obligations, vicinity of realms, conformity of language, and religion', Elizabeth is the object of his 'special liking and goodwill before all princes in the world' (James VI/I, 1984, pp. 69, 51). Like Elizabeth, James expresses no less concern for England than for Scotland: in 1585 he promises to 'employ my crown and country to resist to whatsomever invasion upon yours' and, as the Spanish Armada approaches England, he offers 'my forces, my person, and all that I may command' (James VI/I, 1984, pp. 66, 88); the relation between the two countries is so close, thanks to their sovereigns' friendly bond, that James defines England's foes as the 'common enemies of us both' (James VI/I, 1984, p. 109).

At one point the language of kinship, friendship and affection flows into the verbal fiction of a mother–son relationship. It should be noticed that when the correspondence begins in the mid 1580s, Elizabeth is in her fifties and James is in his twenties. This makes it easier for Elizabeth to place her female 'body natural' centre stage in order to capitalize

on the discourse of motherly affection. At the height of the Anglo-Scottish crisis with Mary awaiting trial, the Anglo-Scottish 'friendship' in question, and James, as son of a person charged with treason, fearful lest his chances regarding the throne of England should be compromised, Elizabeth and James play a mother–son game which serves their respective ends.

The fiction of motherhood proves crucial in the light of Elizabeth's position as the person responsible for sending to trial and sentencing to death her figurative son's natural mother and signing her death warrant. The Queen's strategies to separate herself from the judgement and execution of Mary simultaneously construct a discourse of innocence in the private eyes of James and in the public eyes of her subjects. This skilful rhetorical construction is recorded in three sets of documents that are mutually complementary: her letters to James, her November 1586 speeches to Parliament and the *Proclamation* of Mary's death sentence. All exploit, though in different ways, the Queen's gender. The letters inflect the theme of motherhood, and the speeches and the *Proclamation* exploit the early modern topoi of female irresoluteness and subjection to passion.

In the Elizabeth–James correspondence, shortly before the eruption of the Babington crisis and with Mary already in strict custody, Elizabeth creates the fiction of lifelong affection for James, a person she had never met and never would meet face to face, the son of her second cousin Mary and her godson since Elizabeth had agreed to be James's godmother *in absentia* despite the tension with Mary over the Scottish Queen's claim to the English throne. Elizabeth first introduces references to her love and care for James and portrayals of herself as 'her who ever hath preserved you', then activates maternal rhetoric in full when she declares 'only natural affection *ab incunabulis* [i.e. from the cradle] stirred me to save you from the murderers of your father and the peril that their complices might breed you' (Elizabeth I, 2000, pp. 274–5).[4] Like a good mother, she is ready to imperil her own life to protect James, 'rather than your danger I will venture mine', and to offer instruction and advice, 'all assistance of help as all good endeavor of counsel' (Elizabeth I, 2000, pp. 267, 266). The Queen who would so often refer to herself as the mother of the English people and would encourage public use of the theme of her motherly love for England, for a while concentrates her rhetorical efforts on just one person.

Elizabeth's rhetorical game may have been prompted by James's earlier adoption in June 1585 of the stance of a devoted son: James offers Elizabeth 'my person, and all that is myne, to be used and imployed

by you as a louing mother wold use hir naturall and deuoted chylde', addresses her as 'madame and dearest mother' and signs 'your most louing and deuoted brother and sonn' (Elizabeth I and James VI/I, 1849, p. 15). In another letter he expresses hopes that Elizabeth will 'continue still my loving mother as I shall be your deuoted son' and goes as far as to say that he prefers her 'to all kin and friendship I have in any country' (James VI/I, 1984, pp. 66–7). No exception is made for his mother. Notably, James's letters abound in outpourings of filial love for Elizabeth and recurrent use of the terms 'mother' and 'son' when he has to win back Elizabeth's goodwill after such unpleasant episodes as the killing of Lord Russell on 27 July 1585 in a border fray involving one of his favourites.

When the Babington conspiracy is uncovered, James, informed of his mother's alleged involvement but still unaware of the decision to bring her to trial, sends a special ambassador to congratulate Elizabeth on her escape. The Queen thanks James, 'I do rendar you many loving thankes for the joy you take of my narow escape from the chawes [jaws] of dethe' (Elizabeth I and James VI/I, 1849, p. 38). She now endeavours to prepare James for his mother's condemnation. She exploits the Renaissance stereotype of female compassion, 'I haue taken more dolor for some that ar gilty of this murther than beare them malice that they soght my dethe' and insists that she is worthy of James's trust, 'you shal neuer have cause to regrat your good thoghtz of my meaninge [...] you could neuer haue chosen a more sure trust that wil neuer begile than myself' and declares that her main concern is his 'honor and safty' (Elizabeth I and James VI/I, 1849, pp. 38–9).

On the very first day of Mary's trial at Fotheringay Castle, Elizabeth thanks James for a letter 'fraughted with so careful passion and so effectual utterance of all best wishes for my safety' (Elizabeth I, 2000, p. 289). With reference to a fresh plot against her life, she urges James to consider that while she keeps alive 'the serpent that poisons' her, her life is in danger. In this light, James should 'weigh [her] life and reject the care of murder', that is, accept that his mother is sentenced to death (Elizabeth I, 2000, pp. 293–4). Because people in Scotland were, in James's own words, so 'incensed' because of the condemnation of their former Queen that he 'dare skath [scarce] go abroad for crying out of the whole people', James sends ambassadors and letters to plead for his mother's life (James VI/I, 1984, p. 75, letter to William Keith). These letters abound in pressing questions regarding his own right to the English throne and references to his honour and the reactions of his subjects, while expressions of attachment to his mother are absent. A passage in a letter to the Earl of Leicester is illuminating:

> And whosoever will affirm that I had ever intelligence with my mother since the Master of Gray's being in England, or ever thought to prefer her to myself in the title, or ever dealt in any other foreign course, they lie falsely and unhonestly of me. But, specially, how fond and inconstant I were if I should prefer my mother to the title let all men judge. My religion ever moved me to hate her course, although my honour constrains me to insist for her life. (James VI/I, 1984, p. 78)

James's reaction to Mary's condemnation is hardly surprising given that he had not seen her since he was a baby, that she was suspected of complicity in his father's murder, and that she was a rival by virtue of her claim to the English throne.

Pleading necessity as the motive for Mary's condemnation, 'my too, too needful and helpless cause of defending the breath that God hath given me', Elizabeth reminds James of the Anglo-Scottish league and all the benefits he will receive from her: 'make account, I pray you, of my firm friendship, love and care – of which you may make sure account as one that never minds to fail from my word nor swerve from our league, but will increase by all good means any action that may make true show of my stable amity' (Elizabeth I, 2000, pp. 294–5). James is easily convinced of the expediency of limiting his 'show of indignation' (MacCaffrey, 1992, p. 306) to a very brief interruption of diplomatic relations. Elizabeth pleads her innocence by insisting on the official version that the death warrant, which she had signed and sealed, was dispatched and acted upon without her knowledge while she was still undecided about Mary's fate. In a letter to James she describes Mary's death as 'that miserable accident, which far contrary to my meaning hath befallen' and emphasizes the 'extreme dolor that overwhelms' her (Elizabeth I, 2000, p. 296). A mere month after his mother's beheading, James endorses Elizabeth's rhetoric of innocence and focuses on his self-interest:

> Whereas by your letter and bearer, Robert Carey, your servant and ambassador, ye purge yourself of your unhappy fact, as on the one part – considering your rank and sex, consanguinity, and long-professed goodwill to the defunct, together with your many and solemn attestations of your innocency – I dare not wrong you so far as not to judge honorably of your unspotted part therein; [. . .] And as for my part I look that ye will give me at this time such a full satisfaction in all respects as shall be a mean to strengthen and unite this isle. (Elizabeth I, 2000, p. 297)

As we learn from other letters, Elizabeth gives 'full satisfaction' in terms of financial aid and assurances regarding the league, although to James's disappointment, she does not name him openly as her successor.

After Mary's disappearance from the scene, the mother–son fiction starts again with the virgin Queen's adoption of a language fraught with the physicality of procreation: 'sins you first brethed, I regarded alwais to conserue hit as my womb hit had bine you bare' (Elizabeth I and James VI/I, 1849, p. 72) and with James's reference to his 'thankful memory' of 'your manifold proofs of kindness shown towards me in all times past' and declaration of his conviction that Elizabeth 'will be a good mother' (James VI/I, 1984, pp. 140, 136).

As mentioned before, parallel to her effort in her letters to James to propose herself as a loving foster-mother, innocent of Mary's blood, Elizabeth uses another device to rewrite her role in Mary's execution: public utterances such as speeches to Parliament and proclamations which attest her masterful use of the gender commonplaces of the day. As Marcus, Mueller and Rose show in their edition of Elizabeth's works and Allison Heisch demonstrates by carefully comparing various versions of crucial passages from Elizabeth's addresses to the 1586 Parliament, speeches and proclamations dealing with particularly sensitive issues were fashioned as propaganda pieces.[5] As regards the speeches, the first stage was oral delivery often differing from the first draft, then a copy written down by auditors was revised for publication by Elizabeth and her ministers. Proclamations such as that regarding Mary's death sentence were first read aloud throughout the kingdom, then printed and circulated as widely as possible.

The complexity of the production-revision-publication process of Elizabeth's two speeches to Parliament in November 1586 is proof of their crucial function within the framework of Elizabeth's strategic management of the final act of the twenty-year crisis occasioned by Mary's presence in England. A couple of weeks after Elizabeth's delivery of the second speech to Parliament, the two speeches together with drafts of parliamentary petitions to Elizabeth calling for Mary's blood and a set of comments by R. C. (Robert Cecil or Richard Crompton) were published as *The copie of a letter to the Right Honourable the Earle of Leycester [. . .] And her Maiesties answeres thereunto by her selfe deliuered* (henceforth *Copie*). The *Copie*, bearing the Queen's coat of arms as its frontispiece, was reprinted with Elizabeth's approval in the second edition of Holinshed's *Chronicles*. Another edition of the pamphlet appeared in French in 1587 (for details on circulation, see Elizabeth I, 2000, p. 190). This text, manifestly prepared for wide international public consumption, is the

clearest evidence of Elizabeth's clever use of contemporary expectations regarding the sex of her 'body natural' for her political advantage.

In her two speeches to Parliament delivered in November 1586, when uncertainty regarding Mary's fate after she was found guilty of complicity in Anthony Babington's plot to kill Elizabeth was arousing civil unrest and international alarm, the Queen places her private natural body centre stage. Pressured by Parliament to sign Mary's death warrant, Elizabeth appropriates the cliché of feminine subjection to emotion. In her first speech to Parliament she emphasizes her 'great grief to hear this cause spoken of' (Elizabeth I, 2000, p. 194) and declares:

> And now, albeit I find my life hath been full dangerously sought [...]: yet am I therein so clear from malice (which hath the property to make men glad at the falls and faults of their foes, and make them seem to do for other causes, when rancor is the ground) as I protest it is and hath been my grievous thought that one not different in sex, of like estate, and my near kin, should fall into so great a crime. (Elizabeth I, 2000, p. 192)

The leitmotifs are sorrow, kinship and gender. Referring to the Act of Association of 1585 which specified that any claimant to the throne on whose behalf anyone plotted against Elizabeth should be put to death, Elizabeth complained that 'in this last Acte of Parliament you haue brought me to a narowe straight, that I must giue direction for her death, which cannot be to mee but a most grieuous and irkesome burthen' (*Copie*, 1586, p. 17). Elizabeth's emphasis on her duty to respect the terms of the Act of Association by forcing her 'mystical body' to do something, i.e. signing Mary's death warrant, which troubles the feelings and conscience of her 'body natural', furthers the discourse of her unwillingness to spill Mary's blood or at least her desire to place that 'hard and heavy burden' on someone else's shoulders (Elizabeth I, 2000, p. 189, Elizabeth's first speech to Parliament). A passage in the Petition served the Queen's purpose admirably well: 'Thousands of your Maiesties most liege and louing Subiectes' who have 'entred into a firme and loyall association, and haue thereby protested to pursue vnto the death [...] such as she [Mary] is by iust sentence nowe found to be: can neither discharge their loue, nor well saue their othes, if your Maiestie shall keepe her aliue' (*Copie*, 1586, p. 10).

In her second speech to Parliament of 24 November 1586, Elizabeth insists that her audience should excuse her 'doutefulnesse' and be satisfied with her 'answere answerelesse' (*Copie*, 1586, p. 32). Capitalizing on

one of her proven strategies, one she had successfully used in the past on the occasion of disputes with Parliament such as that over the marriage question, Elizabeth emphasizes her stereotypically feminine irresolution in order to bid for time and evade decision.

The theme of sorrow which recurs in Elizabeth's letters to James and her speeches to Parliament is predominant in the skilfully constructed *Proclamation* of Mary's death sentence, a text carefully prepared for publication by Elizabeth and her councillors. Elizabeth projects her response to Mary's conspiracy as one of sorrow and embraces the ethos of compassion. She declares that she learned 'to [her] great griefe' about the plot 'tending directly to the hurt and destruction of [her] Royal person, and to the subuersion of the Estate of [her] Realme, by forrein inuasions, and rebellions at home' (*Proclamation*, 1586, p. 1). The Queen says that when she was told that the instigator of these 'unnatural and monstrous Acts' had been Mary, 'a Princesse borne, and of our sexe and blood, and one also whose life and honor we had many times before saued and preserued' her sorrow increased, 'in verie trueth we were greatly and deepely griued' (*Proclamation*, 1586, p. 1). Elizabeth engages in a complex rhetorical construction of the image of a Queen beset by councillors, Parliament and public opinion resentful of her reluctance to spill Mary's blood. The Queen states that she has been 'earnestly mooued and counselled, to take undelaied order' by 'sundrie Lordes of our Nobilitie, and others our louing subiectes'. She evokes a vivid image of Lords and Commons in the act of presenting their 'earnest petitions [...] vpon their knees'. She urges her audience to consider how they did 'pray, beseeche, and with many reasons of great force and importance, moue and presse vs, that the said sentence [...] might [...] be declared and published, and the same also finally executed' (*Proclamation*, 1586, pp. 1–2).

In the *Proclamation*, Elizabeth exploits references to criticism by her Parliament to further the discourse of her merciful and compassionate nature. She admits that in the past she had pardoned Mary's 'former offences, manifestly and dangerously committed against vs, our Crowne and Realme [...] contrary to the many advices and requestes of our Subiects, as well in Parliament as otherwise' because of her 'ouer great clemencie' (*Proclamation*, 1586, pp. 2, 3). Criticism of her feminine compassion is also emphasized and used by Elizabeth and R. C. in *The Copie of a letter* to create the fiction of Elizabeth's innocence in Mary's death as a reluctant instrument of the irresistible will of her Parliament speaking on behalf of the whole nation.[6] Introducing the text of the parliamentary petition presented to Elizabeth on November 12, R. C. comments on Mary's many plots which the Queen had 'with no

small indulgence tolerated' because of her 'abundant gratious naturall clemencie and Princely magnanimitie'. R. C. remarks that by 'pursuing her wonted clemencie' Elizabeth exposed herself to the 'heauie displeasure of Almightie God' (*Copie*, 1586, pp. 4, 6). The text of the petition following R. C.'s remarks is also pervaded by references to Elizabeth's merciful nature and furthers the discourse of Parliament's pressures. The speaker of the House of Commons, Sir John Puckering (or Pikeryng), reminds Elizabeth that her generosity in saving Mary's kingdom, honour and life has been repaid with conspiracies: 'therefore there is no place for mercie, since there is no hope that shee will desist from most wicked attempts'. In language that sounds impudent, he warns Elizabeth that 'mercie now in this case towards her, would in the ende proue crueltie against us all, *Nam est quaedam crudelis misericordia*, and therefore to spare her, is to spill us.' Divine retribution for monarchs who fail to punish the wicked delivered by God 'into their handes, of purpose to be slaine by them, as by the ministers of his eternal and diuine Iustice', Puckering reminds Elizabeth, is loss of kingdom (*Copie*, 1586, pp. 7, 9, 10, 20, 27).

R. C. dramatizes Elizabeth's agony upon hearing the petition: the Queen is described as 'of her mercifull disposition of nature, and her Princely magnanimitie, in some conflict with her selfe what to doe' (*Copie*, 1586, p. 20). R. C. suggests that in this 'conflict with her selfe', i.e. the conflict between the ethos of compassion of her feminine 'body natural' and the responsibilities inherent in her 'mystical body', the Queen's 'body natural' prevails. Elizabeth urges Lords and Commons to find 'some other way of remedy, then that they had already required, so farre disagreeing from her owne naturall inclination.' When her 'greedy desire and hungrie will' that a way be found to spare Mary's life while protecting hers prove unrealistic, Elizabeth accepts 'this accident, that *Onely my Iniurers bane, must be my lifes suertie*' (*Copie*, 1586, p. 27).[7]

In her second speech to Parliament on 24 November 1586 Elizabeth voices her preoccupation regarding perceptions of her own role in Mary's end: she suspects that someone may interpret her hesitations and her bid for time as a mere 'shew of clemencie': 'but if any there liue so wicked of nature, to suppose that I prolonged this time onely, *pro forma*, to the intent to make a shew of clemencie [...] they do me so great a wrong, as they can hardly recompence'. She declares her concern that 'any man should thinke mee giuen to crueltie, whereof I am so guiltlesse and innocent [...]. What will they not now say, when it shalbe spread, That for the safety of her life, a Mayden Queene could be content to spill the blood, euen of her owne kinsewoman?' (*Copie*, 1586,

pp. 27, 29). These reflections are indicative of the intensity of Elizabeth's desire to dissociate her private person from Mary's beheading, an event that, apart from its vast political implications, must also have brought back memories of the execution of her mother, Anne Boleyn, and her stepmother, Henry VIII's fifth wife Katherine Howard, when Elizabeth was respectively three and six.

One last master-stroke of Elizabeth's strategy of dissociation, after much displaying of oratorical and epistolary eloquence, is absence and silence. Elizabeth uses physical absence as an almost theatrical dramatization of the conflict between her private and public bodies and a clear indication of the responsibilities of each in Mary's death. While she was usually present at opening sessions of Parliament, she did not open the fifth Parliament on 29 October 1586. Since she was well aware that both Houses would demand Mary's head, she sent three commissioners to open Parliament in her name; while the Queen was absent in her private person, her mystical body, hence her royal authority, was there. Another episode is even more fraught with theatrical immediacy and visual power. Having decided to stay at Richmond and keep away from Mary's trial at Fotheringay Castle, Elizabeth had a large cloth with her crest hung over an empty throne which was placed in the Presence Chamber where Mary was to hear the proclamation of her death sentence. Perhaps no sovereign before or after Elizabeth has been so deeply aware of the possibilities offered by the exceptional condition of possessing two bodies, and of the tensions, advantages and agonies of a divided self.

Notes

1. On Renaissance views of womankind, see Ferguson et al. (1986) and Maclean (1980).
2. The only precedents of Queen regnants in England were Matilda, Henry I's daughter who unsuccessfully attempted to rule in the twelfth century and Mary Tudor, the object of the unhappy recollections of English Protestants and even of part of the Catholic population resentful of Spanish influence via Mary's husband, Philip II.
3. On Elizabeth's learning and oratorical skills, see Shenk, 2003, pp. 78 and 82.
4. References to the murderers of James's father may have been intended as an indirect attack on Mary who was suspected of participation in the murder of Lord Darnley, her second husband, James's father.
5. See also Allinson's discussion of Elizabeth's authorial control of letters and documents bearing her signature but written in a secretary hand (2007).

6. Elizabeth Heale rightly suggests (personal communication) that the Queen may be exploiting the understanding of her legal power as dramatized by Aylmer: 'it is not she that ruleth [...] but the honerable court of Parliament' (Aylmer, 1559, sig.H3v).
7. As Elizabeth Heale pointed out to me, the Queen's use of the expressions 'greedy desire' and 'hungrie will' suggests the discourse of unruly passion associated particularly with feminine, rather than masculine reason.

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4

‘Ma plume vous pourra exprimer’: Elizabeth’s French Correspondence

Guillaume Coatalen

Queen Elizabeth wrote more letters in French than in any other foreign language and for this reason alone, her French correspondence deserves to be more widely read. Judging by the number of letters in French in London, Guildhall Library, MS 1752, a letter-book dated 1595–99, contemporaries took them as seriously as they did her letters in Latin and English, and a provisional estimate suggests the existence of around five hundred items of this kind. Like Latin, French was a diplomatic *lingua franca* and was used just as frequently. If one discounts letters to Mary, Queen of Scots, the French correspondence concerns essentially two main groups of addressees: those in France and those in the Low Countries. A smaller number of letters were also addressed to a handful of Italian, German and Portuguese rulers. The letters to Queen Mary prove that French was not only a language reserved for diplomatic exchanges but was also favoured whenever sensitive decisions bearing directly on who was to rule the kingdom needed to be discussed. The Queen started writing in French at a young age and never stopped. More significantly still, it was in this language that she recorded her impressions of events that she deemed of particular note, as in her letter to Mary, Queen of Scots, dated 24 February 1567, on the subject of Lord Darnley’s murder (Elizabeth I, 2003, pp. 126–7). The present study is based on a relatively small sample of letters in French: those included in the Chicago edition of Elizabeth’s collected works, and some unchartered and unedited letters kept at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (hereafter BnF) and in the Guildhall letter-book.

The Queen was taught French at the age of ten (Collinson, 2004) and her first compositions in French are already very impressive. The sheer number of letters shows that the Queen wrote regularly in this language and indeed developed her own style. Most are official letters mainly of a

formulaic nature, but a significant number are personal ones, of which those addressed to Francis Duke of Anjou – the 'frog' who courted her – and Henri IV are of particular note. These have the tone of conversations between friends about private affairs, respecting the Ciceronian recommendations that are to be found in fifteenth-century Italian handbooks on letter-writing (Henderson, 1983). To paraphrase Demetrius on the art of letter writing, the letters abound in glimpses of her character and revelations of her soul (Henderson, 1983, p. 334).

The distinction between private and public letters, however, does not hold in the case of monarchs. The Queen's marriage was of course a public matter just as much as it was a private one. Furthermore, most letters offer a mixture of formal and more intimate elements, a conscious rhetorical strategy to avoid monotony and hold the reader's attention. The exordium is one place where the Queen's personal voice is frequently heard, often thanks to a striking image or phrase. The Queen's unique style is felt on many occasions, two notable instances of which are a letter in which she responds to Anjou's courtship and a letter in which she discusses the vagaries of a king's life and the best way to rule with Henri IV, topics discussed in letters to James VI of Scotland as well. These are obvious subjects for a monarch, for which there are famous classical models, notably in the works of Cicero and Seneca.

The variety of Elizabeth's correspondence in French is striking, the subject matter being as diversified as it is in the case of her English letters. Alongside practical missives complaining about the ill treatment received by one of her subjects, there are others which are far more reflective in nature, as for example when she muses on the constraints of a monarch's life. Now she condemns or praises, now she calls for punishment or begs to be forgiven for her stupidity. False modesty is a strategy she resorts to when writing to France, as for instance when, in a letter to the Duke of Anjou dated 17 January 1580, she refers to her kingdom as a 'barbarous island' (Elizabeth I, 1935, p. 139). As noted by Steven May (Elizabeth I, 2004, p. xxvi), a major point of interest with her French correspondence is the number of holographs sent to the French court in the 1570s and 1580s, including those addressed to Anjou. The courtship between the two commenced on 17 August 1571, when Anjou visited the Queen at Greenwich, and culminated on 7 November 1581, when a marriage treaty was signed (Doran, 1996).

The editors of the Chicago volume encourage future study in two directions: the Queen's portrayal of herself – already a popular topic when the edition was published – and the Queen's ability in spoken French as reflected in the letters. Concerning the latter point, it is

questionable whether the Queen spoke in the same way as she wrote, but her writings nevertheless do give us some insight into her personal use of the various languages she was fluent in. Perhaps because the task is seemingly such an obvious one, the details of her epistolary style in French – her use of letter-writing conventions, rhetorical devices, syntax, tenses and topoi occurring in the letters – have never been seriously investigated. The present essay sets out to do just that. The findings presented here are partly based on three unpublished letters addressed to Henri IV, chosen and edited as examples of Elizabeth's range of styles in French. The earliest manuscript is an undated letter presumably written around July 1586, demanding the extradition of Charles Paget. The paper of this holograph letter (Paris, BnF, MS français 15782, f.431r–v), displays a crowned eagle watermark. It is written in the characteristic italic script that the Queen used at the end of her reign (Woudhuysen, 2007, p. 16). The second letter, dated 12 September 1597 and copied in the Guildhall letter-book in a neat Elizabethan secretary hand, is one of the longest in French. It supports the cause of the Protestants assembled at Chatelrault in 1597. The third, autograph letter (Paris, BnF, MS français 15888, ff.365r–v), dated 18 April 1600, defends one Captain Henry Thynne whose ship laden with a cargo of fish was commandeered by Frenchmen. This essay offers some general observations in the form of prolegomena to a future complete edition of the French correspondence.

It has long been acknowledged that Elizabeth was an author in her own right who, unlike Henry VIII, loved writing. Poets and courtiers dedicated their works to a fellow poetess and some of her speeches have become classics. Surprisingly little, if any, attention has ever been devoted to the Queen's epistolary style, whether in English or in French, with her poetry (May and Prescott, 1994, pp. 9–43) and speeches (Heisch, 1975, pp. 31–55) faring only a little better in this respect. That this should be so is probably due to several factors. First, the material itself is not easily accessible. The Foreign Papers at the Public Record Office for the end of her reign are being fully calendared only now, and the printed volumes offer little more than brief summaries of the extant material in languages other than English. Second, compared to the letters in French kept at Hatfield House and the British Library, letters in other collections, notably those at the Public Record Office, have rarely been consulted, let alone edited. Third, the Queen's italic script is notoriously difficult to decipher and contemporary copies can be as difficult to read as the autograph manuscripts themselves, as for example in the case of Paris, BnF, MS français 19751. Fourth, a number of letters

that a complete edition would need to include are to be found in a few pre-twentieth century printed books (Unton, 1847). These, however, do not always faithfully reproduce the Queen's idiosyncratic French, and in most nineteenth-century French editions of her letters the original has been emended.[1]

To have a better idea of how Elizabeth writes in French, it is necessary to establish which words are actually hers. Holographs obviously pose no difficulty in this respect. Signed letters, not to mention copies in other hands, are more problematic. In fact, words not in her hand are all potentially suspicious, as even signed letters may have been written by someone else. As in the case of letters in other languages, the majority of the letters in French were probably taken down in dictation and then written out by royal secretaries.[2] One is thus in constant danger of analysing a secretary's style in French – a related but separate topic – rather than the Queen's. Perhaps because the letters are written in a foreign language, it seems far more difficult to distinguish between the Queen's and a secretary's style in French than it is in English. Cecil's orotund style in English, for instance, is quite distinct from the Queen's more pithy language, but no such difference seems to exist in French. This may be explained by the fact that the Queen probably dictated the majority of her letters to secretaries who, having themselves had a similar grounding in French, tended to write in the same way and were generally less prone to developing as personal a style in French as in English. Certain recurrent images stand out as hallmarks of the Queen's high style in both languages, whereas her plain style in French is virtually impossible to distinguish from that of a secretary.

The Queen may well have reused topoi she included in her English correspondence for elaborate passages in French while writing in a fairly neutral style for the rest of her letters. Consequently, passages in the predominant plain style occurring in her French correspondence should not be unequivocally attributed to her secretaries, for the Queen may have been personally involved in the writing of all her letters in French and not just the more private ones. Indeed, she might have considered that the fairly manageable French correspondence was her own preserve, which was not the case when it came to the vast number of official papers that had to be written in English. It might then be conjectured that she was in fact responsible for a larger proportion of the correspondence in French than that in English.

A feel for the Queen's personal style needs to be developed. Steven May notes that she was fond of figurative language in her prose compositions (Elizabeth I, 2004, p. xix). This is certainly true of her

letters in French, in which certain images are inclined to recur. The tendency is partly due to Anglicisms in her prose, her French being influenced by a salient characteristic of her mother tongue – the ability of English to express abstract ideas concretely through the use of short Anglo-Saxon words. However, figurative language abounds in both early modern French and classical literature. Elizabeth may have stored similes gleaned from her readings in Latin and French in a commonplace book or from memory. A case in point is the tempest simile used to describe political and personal hardships which occurs as early as 1553 in a letter in English to Edward VI: 'Like as a shipman in stormy wether plukes downe the sailes tarijnge for bettar winde' (Elizabeth I, 2003, p. 28) and in a letter to James dated March 1586: 'The expertist Seamen My deare brother makes Vant of ther best shippes whan they pas the highest bellowes without yelding and broke nimlest the roughest stormes' (Elizabeth I, 2003, p. 62). The Queen may have been thinking here of messengers who were often delayed by storms when crossing the Channel. The simile is a classical and, to a lesser extent, scriptural one, much used by Seneca and paraphrased by Montaigne. Generally speaking, it is more likely that the inspiration for such passages when writing in French came from classical authors that the Queen was familiar with rather than French ones, even if the same sources are ultimately at stake. It is not easy to evaluate to what extent her style in French differed from that in English. Her syntax in English with its numerous subordinate clauses is as complex as it is in French. The intermediate style used to teach in the tripartite stylistic scheme used in classical rhetoric is typical of royal correspondence written in a formal middle style. Ultimately, this type of epistolary prose with its complex sentences modelled on Latin periods owes much to the practice of double translations, from the Latin and back, that Ascham was so keen on (Collinson, 2004).

The letters in English and French fall into different genres and types. Even though most of them are concerned with relations between the two countries or the settling of some minor contention that had arisen, none are diplomatic in the strict sense of the term, since they do not observe the code of practice for letters sent by ambassadors to sovereigns, namely secrecy, authenticity and precision.[3] Whether written in English or in French, all such correspondence sounds more personal and more assertive than do the letters addressed to the Queen by her ambassadors. Letters written in French, however, might sometimes be expected to differ from letters in English due to inherent differences between the two languages. For example, French is far less concise than English, far more words being necessary to express the

same idea, as borne out by the fact that French translations tend to be significantly longer than their English originals. But the first sentence of a letter to James dated 4 October 1586 shows that her English could be as prolix as her French.[4] Consequently, it seems impossible to distinguish between Elizabeth's style in French and in English. In both languages, the way letters begin and end tends to be conventional. The Queen generally starts by giving thanks for a letter received and concludes by praying God to take good care of the addressee. Another convention of hers is to state that the letter does not need to be any longer than it is. Because the language of diplomacy is full of formulaic expressions, it tends to be associated with the anonymous and repetitive style used by secretaries. However, this is deceptive since in certain instances where some delicate matter is under discussion, the Queen may be suspected of being the author of long-winded sentences full of euphemisms.

To distinguish between her use of English and French, it is instructive to compare her first English prayer, taken from her prayer book, *circa* 1579–82 (Elizabeth I, 2003, pp. 44–5) and its French version (Elizabeth I, 2003, pp. 46–7). The 'French Prayer' – as it is called in London, British Library, MS Facsimile 218 [sig. 8v] – is not a translation of the English one, and even though it is on the same topic, it departs from it in several ways. Because of its written style, which incorporates numerous connectives 'Or [. . .] Car [. . .] Neanatmoins [Néanmoins]' (Elizabeth I, 2003, pp. 46–7), it sounds distinctively French as opposed to the English one, which is closer to spoken English on account of its more paratactic style resembling that of the 1562 Geneva Bible. The 'English Prayer' quotes the Psalms repeatedly. This is not just a thematic choice but also a linguistic and stylistic one, which actually makes it sound like a psalm whereas the 'French Prayer' does not. Where the English prayer uses the passionate but simple rhetoric of the Psalms marked by relentless questioning and insistent parallelism, as in 'How excedinge is thie goodnes, and how great myne offences?' (Elizabeth I, 2003, p. 46), the French one resorts to a more sublime and periodic style, in the manner of a proto-Bossuet:

> Ie te remercie mon bon dieu de l'honneur que tu m'as faict, et ie te suplie me faire la grace: que ie m'acquiste de mon deuoir gouuernant bien l'estat et administrant fidelement la iustice: sans auoir exception des personnes, et ainsi ie sentiray auec mes subiects ta tres saincte benediction de laquelle ie cognoy estre venieu la Paix accompagnée de beaucoux des biens, de laquelle jusqu'a maintenant, a ton honneur et soulagement de ton esglise, i'ay iouy ce pendant mes

> plus proches Voisins ont senti les maulx de la guerre sanglante et les poures enfants persecutez ont trouvé auec repos aseuree. (Elizabeth I, 2003, p. 46)

Bossuet's reputation as the greatest orator of his age rested on his powerful funeral orations, which combined simplicity and an even more complex syntax (Quillacq, 1903, pp. 780–1). Elizabeth's French looks forward to the second half of the seventeenth century, being very much influenced by Latin syntax, not least in its use of cyclical constructions. Her English sounds spoken (e.g. 'This is my case. Then where is my hope', Elizabeth I, 2003, p. 45) whereas her French feels written. However, this is not the case with her letters. Given that her French does not seem markedly different from the English of her letters, a simpler task would be to compare her written French with that of the French secretaries who copied her letters.

The Chicago edition conveniently contains two copies of the same letter to Henri IV dated July 1593 (Elizabeth I, 2003, pp. 165–6; 166–7). The editors note that the second version 'illustrates how a copyist whose native language was French might emend or otherwise alter Elizabeth's grammar and diction' (Elizabeth I, 2003, p. 166). Variants are recorded in a third copy. The copyist has regularized and smoothed out the rougher edges of the Queen's prose, which is however considerably more expressive. Her French is more concise than the French copyist's as when she omits syllables – for example, she writes 'penteray' (Elizabeth I, 2003, p. 165) instead of 'repentiray' (Elizabeth I, 2003, p. 166) – or personal pronouns. The French copyist replaces the exclamatory 'Ah' in 'Ah c'est dangereux' (Elizabeth I, 2003, p. 165) with a logical connective 'Or cela est dangereux' (Elizabeth I, 2003, p. 166), with concomitant loss of freshness. Inversions and more vivid wordings are often edited out. The Queen is particularly fond of past subjunctives, so typical of sixteenth-century French, which are avoided by the French copyist. When she uses the imperfect 'Ie sentoys', the latter chooses the perfect 'Iay senti' instead. The participle 'conté' does not agree in gender and number with 'nouvelles' – which is often the case in sixteenth-century French (Gougenheim, 1974, p. 252) – while 'contées' does in the later copy, and like Rabelais (Gougenheim, 1974, p. 85), Elizabeth places 'aucun' after the noun in 'mondain respect aulcun' contrary to the second version. Other inversions are typical of sixteenth-century French, such as 'mieulx tousiours' and 'le mieulx cognoist'. Elsewhere, she does not invert the verb and pronoun when the copyist does. 'Nous menace' is more expressive than 'menace'. 'Le terreur', which is simply wrong, is emended to

'la terreur'. The copyist frequently changes the original by introducing a sentence here and there and may also seek to avoid the repetition of the verb 'faire'. She dispenses with the pronoun in 'ou me promettes'. Generally speaking, her French has all the hallmarks of the flexibility so typical of the sixteenth century. Several factors may account for the Queen's idiosyncrasies. French was not her mother tongue. The original letter dated July 1593 was written slightly earlier than the copy – Bnf, MS français 5045, f.408 is a copy from the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century (Elizabeth I, 2003, p. 166) – which could explain why the language appears more archaic. Even if her style changed, the Queen's French retained most of its original features and failed to keep abreast of the way the language had evolved on the continent.

The looser syntax and word order that characterize the Queen's prose are reminiscent of Latin flexibility. Indeed, her Latinate French owes much to the formal grounding that she received from her tutor Jean Belmain. The French he taught her was most probably based on texts written in a style that was far removed from the idiomatic usage of the day, such texts being deliberately chosen for the way they exemplified elaborate patterns closely modelled on Latin periods. Even if other pedagogical resources such as popular phrase books and dictionaries were available at the time, Elizabeth's slightly archaic and overtly grammatical French is undoubtedly the product of a far stricter education founded on the practice of double translation (Collinson, 2004). The following passage from a letter dated 16 October 1567 to the Queen Regent of France proves however that her spoken French must have been idiomatic enough (I quote Strickland's translation): 'Monsieur Pasquier (as I believe) thinks I have no French, by the passions of laughter into which he throws me by the formal precision with which he speaks and expresses himself' (Elizabeth I, 1935, p. 52).[5] It seems that she wrote in a much more formal style than she spoke, which is hardly surprising given the difference that naturally existed between spoken and written French at the time, as recorded, for instance, in dialogues between low characters in comedies such as Pierre de Larivey's (Zilli, 1993).

A concordance-assisted search in the Frantext database ('Base Textuelle Frantext', ATILF – CNRS & Nancy Université) has revealed that some of the phrases and expressions used by the Queen were in fact borrowed from Protestant authors, notably Calvin, as well as other authors she had read and even translated, such as Marguerite de Navarre (Swain, 1973). In a few cases, such borrowings seem to be specific to Elizabeth's letters whereas the majority are to be found also in the writings of

contemporary Catholic authors including Montaigne. Through them, one gets a glimpse of the kind of texts that the Queen probably read in French, such collocations being in keeping with the style of the French books that were given to her, most of which were either religious or poetic in nature (Lawson, 2007).

Elizabeth's sentences in French tend to be long and yet concise, often dispensing with articles, which was a characteristic feature of sixteenth-century French (Gougenheim, 1974, pp. 63–5). Montaigne's prose too is famous for its concision and syntactical complexity. In both cases, conciseness is due to the influence of Latin and in particular Ciceronian Latin. In Elizabeth's French, the lack of punctuation and consistent spelling and capitalization, however, makes matters worse and the reader is sometimes overwhelmed by an endless flow of words. The type of patterning typical of Latin periods occurs conspicuously, even in one of her letters in English to Queen Mary dated 2 August 1556 as in 'the olde loue of Painenams to ther Prince, and the reuerent fere of Romaines to ther Senate [...] muse for my parte; and blushe for thers' (Elizabeth I, 2003, p. 33). Her French syntax displays frequent occurrences of synonymic pairs as at the beginning of a letter to the Prince of Condé dated 3 October 1570 (Bnf, MS français 19751, ff.237r–v), 'mot et Lettre [...] sauf repos et bonne paix'.[6] It may well be that such pairs are borrowed from an English original, since they occur frequently in English, although Montaigne is also fond of them (Kaye, 1982, p. 145). Periodic constructions occur far less frequently in Elizabeth's writing from the 1570s onwards. Their use may also depend on the letter's recipient. The use of Ciceronian tricolons combined with gradations is striking in a letter to Mary Queen of Scots, dated 24 February 1567: 'My ears have been so deafened and my understanding so grieved and my heart so affrighted [...] I exhort you, I counsel you, and I beseech you' (Elizabeth I, 2003, pp. 126–7). Personal changes reflect a more general shift from Ciceronian prose to a more natural style exhibiting fewer patterns. Nevertheless, traces of Elizabeth's early style survive in emotional letters written in July 1593, when she laments over the French King's conversion to the Catholic faith, 'Ah what griefs, O what regrets, O what groanings felt I in my soul' (Elizabeth I, 2003, p. 165). The Queen's personal style may manifest itself in unexpected places and is not only reserved for occasions when she gives expression to her private thoughts on a given subject. It may be encountered in a variety of rhetorical contexts. More often than not, it takes the form of memorable language designed to appeal to the reader's passions, as in one undated holograph letter to the French King demanding the extradition

of a Roman Catholic conspirator, written throughout in a passionate style full of hyperbole which draws on a mixture of fear for the King's life and anger directed against the Jesuits. This high yet intimate style cannot fail to stand out against a backcloth of plain diplomatic formulas. It is characterized by figurative language and allusions to classical sources. At the other end of the rhetorical spectrum, a plain narrative of a legal sort may offer precious insight into the Queen's style in French, as for example in autograph Bnf, MS français 15888 (ff.365r–v), a letter to Henri IV dated 18 April 1600 in which Captain Henry Thynne's fate is discussed.

All in all, although not flawless, the French of Elizabeth's French correspondence remains remarkably faithful to standard late Middle French usage. However, since sixteenth-century written French was very much based on Latin due to the pervading influence of humanism, her French is not fundamentally different from her English, also heavily influenced by humanism. In the case of the Queen's letters both in French or English, Latin epistolary style and in particular the style of Cicero, seems to be the ultimate model.

Appendix

This annotated edition is diplomatic. Abbreviations have been expanded but the original spelling retained. Slashes '/ /' enclose authorial additions and square brackets illegible deletions. The order is chronological and each letter is accompanied by a modern English translation.

Undated [July? 1586] to Henri IV; Paris, BnF, MS français 15782, ff.431r–432r (holograph) (by permission of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France)

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Mon tres cher frere je n'escripvis jamais de subiect qui plus m'ennuya non tant pour le dangier de ma mort comme pour y voir macule le sang de tes personage que j'ay touiours & prins plus de soing que leur merites en mo*n* endroi. ont demandes & face que ne jugges decen de faulte impressio*n* je vous ay bien clairement esclarcy pour Ce Gentilhomme de bon lieu sage et assez instruict de ce negotie & & vous suplie Croyez que nul regret ne toucha plus au vif co*n*siderant leur naissance leur dignité & mon tort & jniure. Mais comme la source de ceste trahison m'est machine par ces hipocrites ~~th~~ & demoniakes Jesuites qui mettant pour

le maxime de leur exhortations que c'est chose meritoires[7] de fuir un Roy que le pape a mauldict aussi prie je a dieu qui te & gard ~~n~~ n'incitent aultres subiects de Rois pour ne leur tromper co*m*plaire leur humeurs. Vous aues garde un grand Tresor au bastille qui merite bien d'estre favorise pour cest bel acte quaestor co*mm*e bonneme*n*t il a entrepris contre son Souverainy j'ay grande ho*n*te que les susnommés[8] p*re* voyent ceste crainte de leur gra*n*deur qui n'oses remander un tel mechant traitre jespere qu'a present co*m*bien que bien tard il vous plaira selo*n* les traictes me livrer ce traictre & Charles Paget combien tant a ce meurtre je me figure que jaurais plus de respect a nos signes & amities que si indigne n'eut en faire la rupture je co*n*fesse que cela excepte je vous ay tousiours

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trouve Prince tres co*n*stant en n*os*tre Amitie & Jure que n'oncques en don*n*eray je juste Cause sinon ~~par~~ Contrainte par Juiure qui ne puis ni vient suporter je charge ce Gentilhom*m*e a vous com*m*uniques quelques mesmes conceptions & avis en telles choses que je m'assure vous touchant de bien pres voyez si auant que si ne vous en gardes je crains plus que n'ose dire & Apelle dieu a temoing que le desir ardent que je tiens de vostre Conseruation & hon*n*eur ne y co*n*vient & non mettre hormis quelconq*ue* conspire qui en ay este nestant traicte indignement & traise & pour Conclure faictes estat de moy Monsieur mon bien aimé bon frere com*m*e de la creature que vous souhaite autant de bien contentement & honeur com*m*e a modestie propre comme Dieu scaist a qui je ne cesse de prier qu'il vous don*n*e bon*n*e vie & longue / Vostre tres affectionnée bonne soeur & Cousine Elizabeth.

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A mon bon frere
Cousin Le Roy
Treschristien

[My dearest brother I have never written on a subject which has bothered me more, not so much for the danger of my own death than for seeing your people's blood spilt, whom I have always taken more care of than their merits to me have required, merits which have led me to set right a wrong impression you may be entertaining, which I have cleared beyond doubt for this gentleman of good rank, who is wise and now well instructed enough in this negotiation and I beg you to believe that no regret has ever touched me more to the quick considering their birth and dignity and my harm and offence. But since the source of this

treachery was plotted by these hypocritical and fiendish Jesuits who proclaim as the maxim of their exhortations that it is laudable to flee from a king whom the Pope has cursed. Therefore I pray God to keep you and not to encourage other subjects of kings to cheat on them and indulge in their humours. You have under your guard a great treasure at the Bastille who deserves well to be favoured for the noble deed which he has so blatantly carried out against his sovereign. I am greatly ashamed that the guards should predict that the fear of their grandeur should prevent them from punishing such an evil traitor. I hope that now even though it is very late, it will please you in accordance with the treaties to deliver the traitor Charles Paget. The importance of this execution is such that it would be a token of our friendship which it would otherwise be scandalous to break. I confess that, this excepted, I have always found you a very constant prince in our friendship and swear I will never give just cause if not under constraint and perjury which I cannot nor will endure. I trust the gentleman to inform you of a few similar conceptions and opinions in such matters which I believe touch you closely. Mark my word, if you do not take heed – I fear more than I can say, and I call God to witness the ardent desire I have for your conservation and honour should it be suitable and not to put some conspirator who has shown himself to be one without having been treated indignantly, and has deceived. To conclude, treat me my Lord, my well beloved good brother like a creature who wishes you as much contentment and honour as proper modesty may, God knows, to whom I ceaselessly pray to grant you a good and long life. Your most affectionate good sister and cousin Elizabeth. To my good brother and cousin the most Christian king.]

12 September 1597, to Henri IV; London, Guildhall Library, MS 1752, pp. 255–8 (by permission of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France)

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Tres hault etc. Il ya La quelques Annees que l'estat et les affaires des Eglises reformées de vostre Royaulme ont este plus /assez/ esloignées et de nos pensees et quasi de nos oreilles. Tant a cause de l'assurance que nous nous donnions quen vostre personne parvenüe a la dignite Royalle Ils debvoyent trouver un appui si ferme de tout ce qui pouuoit concerner leur bien estre, que besoing ne[9] leur seroit rechercher l'intercession ou

faueurs des aultres: Comme aussy pour euiter L'occasion que pourraient prendre[10] aulcunes malveuïllantes de – calompnier nos actions envers vous les chargeans de curiosite en l'estat d'aultruy. Et volontiers – desirerions qu'il n'y eult cause ni signe de nous en approchera Jamais de plus pres. Mais il est advenu que lors que nous en pensions Il nous est venu trouuer vn Gentilhomme deputé de par lesdites Eglises assemblées a Chastellerault auec Instruction de nous informer tant de ce que depuis vostre regne auoit este traicte et negotie touchant leur estat, et par eulx entre eulx mesmes de vostre permission. Et auec vous et vostre conseil: comme aussy de nous rechercher de L'entremise de nostre credit, qu'ils pensent que nous debuons auoir envie envers vous pour Leur faciliter l'asseurance et accomplissement des conditions, qui pourront estre accordées en leur faueur[11] par ceulx, que vous avez deputé a en traicter Lesquelles ~~remonstranses~~ remonstrances voyes combien que les mesmes raisons que nous ont fait aultrefois escheuir de nous entremesler en leurs affaires, s'abretoyent encores a cestefois a nostre consideration pour nous en detourner: Si este e que se presentoyent quant et quant des aultres plus puissantes a nous esmouuoir de Leur prester nostre main,[12] Lesquelles aussy nous semblent estre aultant d'Arguments de tresgrande force de vous ployer a Leur en donner entiere satisfaction et – contentement. Soit Il que regardies le merite des

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personnes suppliantes ou la raison des choses[13] quils demandent. Car nous nous asseurons que […] vn naturel genereux et Royal comme le vostre ne peult s'estrelaisse tomber de sa memoire les seruices de ceulx qui en ont alors monstre plus d'effet, quand meme Ils auoient d'esperence d'en tirer profit.[14] Et qui ont donne de remarquables preuues de leur prud'homie[15] et Loyaute en ces mesmes dangers, esquels le default de semblable vertu en ceux Là, qui peult estre maintenant retardent La bonte de vostre esprit vous faisoit ainsi besoing de leur fidelité. – Lesquelles considerations de leur personnes sont secondées de plusieurs aultres dignes d'estre non moins estimées en leur longue patience, conformitée a l'estat de vos affaires, et simplicite de leur procedures. Car ils nous ont fait foy qu'ils ne se sont assembles pour traiter de leur affaires sinon soubs vostre aduis et autorite octroyée en mesmoire de leur seruices a ceste mesme fin, – quils peussent trouuer moyen de sasseurer contre la malice de ceulx, qui leur veulent mal. Nous auons veu aussy en ce, qui s'est passe entre eulx et vos deputes, que les demandes, qu'ils vous font, sont fort inferieures aux faueurs et conditions, que Leur

ont este concedées par des aultres Roys, qui n'avoyent tant de raison de Leur recognoistre comme vn mesmes à L'Edict de Januier par consentement des Estats de vostre Royaume donne de celuy, qui n'en auoit senty d'eulx sinon les Armes, auxquels La necessite les constraignoit. Il en apport aussy que le but de leur poursuites ne se ressent n'y – d'humeur d'altercation ny d'ambition, ny d'aultre desseing, que celuy de la seurete de leur vies, biens et consciences.[16] Laquelle la nature esguïllonne[17] en chascun de rechercher et ne sepeult en Justice denyer a ceulx, qui sont

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membres tant considérables de vostre estat, et recommendez de merites tout notoires envers vostre personne Il y a deplus une autre raison, qui nous a convié a vous parler si franchement de ce sujet, Laquelle se – deriue entierement hors du soing, que nous auons de tout ce; qui peult que le bien ou de vous mesmes, ou de vostre estat ascavoir en L'obseruaunce, que nous auons faite des facons de proceder de ceulx, qui ont plus – d'authorite, chez vous sur ce, qui touche vos Subiets de La Religion reformée, nous auons tousiours eüe opinion que ce estoit par desseing qu'on vous rendoit difficile enuers eulx, a fin que par Leur affaiblissement donner plus de prix a soy mesmes, et de vous imposer quasi necessite de vous confier et appuyer d'eulx seules et de Leur moyens Conseil rester avantagieux aux Autheurs mais s'il est vtile a vous de vous y arrester vous Jugerez par ceste consideracion, qu'il vous retire de La confïance, bienveuillance, support et Loyauté de ces Serviteurs qui vous ont tesmoigne leur devoirs par les monuments de leur sang, pour vous ieter entre les bras[18] des aultres, Lesquels ne se sont que bien peu de temps y a devestir et des visages et des faits omerts[19] d'Ennemys tresobstines, non qu'il soit, de nostre Intention de vous engendrer soubcon de vos Serviteurs Loyaux. Mais seulement pour vous ramenteuoir (si ne deplaignerez l'advertissement de celle qui Dieu merci a eu l'experience d'un Long gouvernement) qu'il est plus approchant du debuoir et de La prudence Royale de se porter pour vniuersel et esgal euvers les Subiets selon L'equite de leur causes,[20] que de s'empieter ces partiallites des humeurs privees/.[21] Lequel aduertissement nous vous supplierons de prendre de tel goust, qu'en est la purete de la source, dont Il se – deriue ascauoir d'une sincere amitie, Et de mesurer a mesme prix en faueur des gens tres dignes de vostre grace, et de penser que L'instance, que vous en faisons ne se fonde en aultre consideration, que de celle compassion, qui nous estant naturelle enuers toutes sortes

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des affliges, n'a plus abille tesmoïgn de ses sinceres operations (ou Il a este de raison de – l'estendre) qui vous mesmes alors quil estoit de vostre cas et interets de nous en solliciter – pour eux: Que si aulcuns y aura chez vous qui en vouldront faire aultre construction pour esconduire mes requestes, nous nous asseurons quelles seront par vous recogneües de porter ces marques d'equite et de raison,[22] qu'elles se font par celle qui a merite qu'on Les La respecte en choses raisonnables, et pour de tels qui ont l'honneur (quoy qu'en descrient leur Enemis) d'auoir este les Corands[23] de vostre Jeunesse, Compagnons de vos afflictions, et Instruments et aydes principaulx a vos meilleures fortunes, Lesquelles nous supplierons celuy qui en est – autheur de vous conserver longtemps, vous donnant de sa grace les conseils les conseils et aduis les plus idoines[24] a vous en faire ioüyr./

12. Sept. 1597.

[Highest etc. For a few years already the state and the affairs of the Reformed Churches of your realm have been rather far from our thoughts and almost from our ears. This is just as much due to the assurance we have given ourselves that in your person, which had attained the royal dignity, Protestants have had to find a support so firm for everything that might concern their well-being, which is why they have had no need to seek for the intercession or favours from others. And also to avoid the occasion that slanderers could profit from to calumniate our actions towards you by exciting their curiosity for the state of others. And we have gladly wished that there were neither cause nor sign that we should ever approach them closer. But it came about that while we were thinking of them, a gentleman sent by the said Churches assembled at Chatelrault came to see us with instruction to inform us on what had been concluded and negotiated regarding their state since the beginning of your reign, by and among themselves under your permission and with you and your council. And also to seek us out in order to intervene with our influence, they think we may have over you to facilitate the assurance and accomplishment of the conditions, which could be granted in their favour by those that you have sent to treat them with. Such remonstrance makes me see how much the same reasons that made us in the past avoid meddling in their affairs, have once again come to our notice to dissuade us from it. If in the past others who were more powerful to move us to lend them our hand presented themselves. These seem to us to be as many arguments of great force

to make you bow and give them entire satisfaction and contentment. It either concerns the merit of beggars or the reason for which they ask. For we are sure that a generous and royal nature like yours cannot let slip from his memory the services of those who have had the greatest effects, even if they hoped to take advantage of them. And who have given remarkable proof of their prudence and loyalty in the face of the same dangers and whose lack of similar virtue in those, who perhaps now delay the goodness of your spirit, made you thus need their faithfulness. Their considerations are supported by several others worthy to be no less esteemed for their great patience, conformity to the state of your affairs, and simplicity of their procedures. For they have sworn that they have assembled to treat of their affairs only under your advice and authority bestowed in memory of their services to that same end, that they should find the way to protect themselves against the malice of those who wish them evil. We have also seen in what has occurred between them and your deputies, that the demands that they have made to you are vastly inferior to the favours and conditions, that have been bestowed on them by other kings who have had fewer reasons to recognize them, to be similar to the edict of January, by consent of the states of your realm, which, if not, would have felt from them the arms to which necessity forced them. It also transpires that the goal of their pursuits cannot be felt to be either ambition or wrangling, with no other design than that of the safety of their lives, goods and consciences, which nature spurs in everybody to look for and which cannot in fairness be denied to those who are such considerable members of your state, and recommended for notable merits towards your person. Furthermore there is another reason which has invited us to speak to you so frankly on this subject, which derives entirely from the care that we have of all that which can foster your good or that of your state, that is to say the observation that we have made of the ways of those who have more authority in your country on that which concerns your subjects of the reformed religion. We have always been of the opinion that it was deliberate to make you difficult towards them, thanks to their weakening, to give more worth to themselves, and almost to impose on you the necessity to confide in them and seek their support only, and with their mean advice to stay advantageous to its authors. But if it is helpful for you to consider it, you will judge through this consideration, that they take away from you the trust, benevolence, support and loyalty of those servants who have born testimony to their duties by monuments of blood, by throwing you into the arms of others who have only very recently uncovered their faces

and the deeds of very obstinate enemies, not that it were in our intention to instil in you doubts concerning loyal servants. But only to recall to you (if you do not refuse the warning of one who, thank God, has enjoyed the experience of a long government) that it is closer to royal duty and prudence to behave universally and equally towards subjects by considering the equity of their causes than to give way to the partiality of private humours. Which warning, we beg you to receive as the taste of a pure source, from which it derives, that is to say a sincere friendship, and to measure according to the same price in favours people very worthy of your grace and to think that the instance that we make of it is founded on no other consideration than the compassion which is natural to us towards the afflicted of all sorts, and has no more cunning witness of its sincere operations (where it was right to spread it) than yourself when it was in your case and interest to solicit us for them if some at your court would like another scheme to deny my requests, we assure ourselves that they will be recognized by you to bear the signs of equity and reason, that they make of the ones who have deserved them, that we respect them in reasonable matters, and for those who have the honour (contrary to what their enemies say) to have been the comrades of your youth, the companions of your afflictions, and instruments and principal aides to your best fortunes, which we beg he who is the author to keep you for long, bestowing on you his grace, and making you hear the soundest advice and opinions. 12 Sept. 1597.]

18 April 1600, to Henri IV; Paris, Bnf, MS français 15888, ff.365r–v (autograph) (by permission of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France)

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Treshault, Trese vaillent, et trespuissant Prince, nostre trescher & tresame bon frere & Cousin. Sur la plainte qui nous est faite par vn gentilhomme nommé le Cap*itai*ne Henry Thynne, d'vn tresdur traictement[25] qu'il a depuis nagueres receu en vostre ville de Paris par la menee de quelques vns, lesquels pour empescher l'execution d'vn Jugement que des long temps il a poursuivi là, pour auoir son droit du partage appartenant a vne demoiselle françoise qu'il a espousée, l'ont fait constituer prisonnier soubs pretexte de lui demander la restitution d'vn navire chargé de poisson, qui en l'anneé 91 auroit esté pris sur la coste d'Espagne pour biens Espagnols, lequel sur aiant esté doneé charge de ramener icy pour

estre iugé selon la Justice, il arriva que led*it* nauire perit entrant au port. Et led*it* Cap*itai*ne estant apres appellé en Justice par vn francois qui se disoit proprietaire dudit nauire Il marchandise, il respondit au proces, & fut deschargé pour la perte du nauire, qui fut iugeé auoir arriué par vn malheureux accident & non pas par sa faute, Et ses parties aduerses n'ont iamais sceu ou voulu depuis considerer la verification qui en a esté faite, sinon maintenant que pour se seruir de ce pretexte a autre desseing en leur exigence, ils le font ietter en prison sur de grosses pretensions, pource qu'ils sçauent bien qu'estant estranger il ne trouuera pas la caution qui soit suffisante pour l'en tirer. La rudesse de ceste procedure, & la souuenance des seruices que nous a faits le dit gentilhomme nous ont meu a vous prier bien instamment de commander qu'il soit eslargi, et si ses parties veulent persister plus auant contre luy de les renuoier par deçà, selon que veut l'affaire pour y faire leurs poursuites, & on leur fera telle Justice

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que l'equité requierra, et le gentilhomme est de si bonne condition qu'ils n'ont point a craindre qu'il se veuille absenter pour euiter ce que la Justice luy imposera. Ce que nous fait promettre que ne nous esconduirez point en chose si raisonnable. Dont nous vous prions affectueusement en sa faueur, afin que ces mauuaises menees ne soient point cause de sa ruine.[26] Et sur ceste asseurance nous prierons Dieu Treshault, Tresexcellent, et trespuissant Prince, nostre trescher & tresamé bon frere & Cousin, qu'il vous tienne tousiours en sa saincte garde.

Vostre bien Affectionée Soeur
Elizabeth R
A Nostre Palais de Grenewich
Ce xviiie d'Apuril 1600

[Highest, most valiant and mighty prince, our dearest and most beloved good brother and cousin. On the complaint which has been made to us by a gentleman named Captain Henry Thynne about a very harsh treatment which he once received in your city of Paris by the will of a few, who to obstruct the application of a judgement which he had long sought for to impinge on his right to share goods belonging to his wife, a young French noblewoman, you have made him prisoner under the pretext of demanding the restitution of a ship carrying a cargo of fish, which in the year '91 was captured on the Spanish coast for Spanish goods. Having been ordered to bring it back here to be judged according

to the law, it so happened that the said ship sank when entering port. And thereafter the said Captain, having been summoned to court by a Frenchman who declared himself to be the owner of the said ship's goods, answered at the trial and was discharged of the loss of the ship, which was judged to have come about as the result of an unfortunate accident and not by his fault, and the other side has never known or wanted to consider if it was checked, either than to use the pretext now for another trick in their demands. They throw him into prison under false pretences, because they know full well that since he is a foreigner, he will not find sufficient bail to pull him out. The harshness of the procedure, and the acknowledgement for the services which the said gentleman rendered to us has moved us to pray you most insistently to order his release, and if the other side wishes to persist against him to send them further in accordance with what the affair requires and take legal action against him, justice shall be made to them proportionately to what equity demands. The gentleman is of such quality that they need not fear he should want to flee to avoid what justice should impose on him. Which made us promise that you will not refuse us such a reasonable request. We affectionately pray you to intervene in his favour, to prevent these ill-doings from causing his ruin. And with this assurance, we pray God, highest, most excellent and powerful prince, our dearest and most beloved good brother and cousin, to keep you forever under his sacred guard. Your most affectionate sister Elizabeth R At our palace of Greenwich the 18th of April 1600].

Notes

1. See a letter to Henri IV, dated 1601 (*Collection*, 1820–21, pp. 37–8). Other nineteenth-century French editions of correspondence containing letters by Elizabeth include Henri IV, 1843–58, and Catherine de Médicis, 1880–1943. I wish to thank the participants of the 'Role and Rule' conference (6–8 February 2009, London, Shakespeare's Globe) for their comments, and Alessandra Petrina for her unfailing enthusiasm and encouragement. I am grateful to the anonymous reader for improving the chapter and to Henry Wyld for correcting the English, including the translations, and to Olivier Millet for reading the annotated transcriptions so carefully.
2. 'Wisasims Yetswiert [*sic*] was Secretary for the French Tongue in 1576, and Charles Yetswiert in 1590 (Public Record Office, subsidy rolls, E 179/69/82, E 179/266/13). Thomas Edmondes was appointed to the post on 15 May 1596 (William Murdin, *A Collection of State Papers* [1759], II, 809)' (May and Prescott, 1994, p. 10).

3. For diplomatic letters in French a century later, see Neveu, 1993. Judith Henderson kindly brought my attention to this bibliographical reference.
4. 'I hope My deare brother that my manye Waighty affayres in present may make my laWful excuse for the retardance of the answer to the your Ambassaduurs charge but I doute not but you shaLbe honorably satisfaict in alL the pointz of his Commission and next after my oWne errand done I must rendar you my innumerable thankes for suche amicable offers as hit hathe pleased you make making you Assured that with Gods grace you shal neuer haue cause to regret your good thoughtz of my meaning to deserue as much good wiL and affection as Euer One prince owen[owed] an other' (Elizabeth I, 2003, p. 65).
5. I have been unable to consult the original manuscript, presumably still in the National Library of St Petersburg (Mary, Queen of Scots, 1843, p. 24).
6. See also a letter to the Prince of Condé dated 25 November 1575: 'grand aise et Contentement' (Bnf, MS français 19751, ff.237v–238r) and 'Vos priuileges et Libertez', 'a son honneur et au Rang', 'plaisir et Contentement', 'Lieu et degré', 'faueurs bien honorables et aduentageuses', 'outragé et offencé Luy et Les siens' in a letter to the States General dated 19 January 1978 (Bnf, MS français 3277, ff.4–5).
7. 'Ils estiment que cela est un service de Dieu et un oeuvre meritoire' (Calvin, 1984, p. 203).
8. I owe this reading to Olivier Millet.
9. 'Par tel engin que besoing ne seroit tant empescher/de gens de bien' (Rabelais, 1912–13, p. 377).
10. 'Prendre/ occasion de se desbaucher' (Calvin, 1961, p. 327).
11. 'Cela ne se fait pas tant/en leur faueur, que pour donner exemple à tous' (Calvin, 1960, p. 95).
12. 'Et quasi leur prester la main' (Calvin, 1957, p. 25).
13. 'Rendre parfaictement/la raison des choses' (Boaistuau, 1981, p. 157).
14. 'Dont il ne/se peut tirer nul profit' (Calvin, 1961, p. 492).
15. I owe this reading to Olivier Millet.
16. 'Leurs ames at consciences, aue contre les honneurs, vies, et/ce peu de biens qui leur estoit demeuré' (*Histoire*, 1972, pp. 98–100).
17. 'La cognoissance de nous mesmes non/non seulement aiguillonne chacun àcognoistre Dieu' (Calvin, 1957, p. 51).
18. 'Se gecta entre les bras de ce/pauvre serviteur' (Marguerite de Navarre, 1965, p. 817).
19. The word does not make sense here.
20. 'Esmouvoir Dieu davantage par l'equitéde leurs causes' (Calvin, 1960, p. 340).
21. 'Pour y descouvrir ses humeurs privées' (Montaigne, 1965, p. 414).
22. 'Selon raison et équité' (Calvin, 1961, p. 266).
23. Presumably synonymous with 'Compagnons'.
24. Word typical of Calvin.
25. 'M'a causé si aigre et dur traitement d'elle' (Taillemont, 1991, p. 150).
26. 'Tu monstres comment l'homme a eu une bonne nature de Dieu, et qu'il a esté cause de sa ruine' (Calvin, 1957b, p. 104).

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5

‘Most peereles Poëtresse’: the Manuscript Circulation of Elizabeth’s Poems

Carlo M. Bajetta

To Spenser she was the ‘most peereles Poëtresse’. For Puttenham she could write verses ‘passing sweete and harmonicall’ (Spenser, 2006, p. 209; Puttenham, 1589, sig.2E2). A number of her courtiers, including her stern Secretary of State Robert Cecil, addressed verses to her in the hope of gaining her favour. Clearly, Elizabeth I had a reputation as a poet and an appreciator of poetry. Witnesses and anecdotes testifying to her writing and liking of verse abound; however, ascertaining, beyond flattery and royal eulogy, what image the Elizabethans had of their Queen as a poet is far from simple (May 1999, pp. 1–230; Duncan-Jones, 1992; Eckhardt, 2007).

As the following pages intend to show, an analysis of the contents of the manuscripts and early printed books which preserve Elizabeth’s poems can be of great help in this respect. The textual associations of some contemporary miscellanies, in fact, appear to be far less casual and naive than suspected so far.

1. Jealous of her toys?

Little attention has been hitherto devoted to the items associated to the Queen’s verses in contemporary print and manuscript miscellanies. One cannot help noting how editors from Leicester Bradner (Elizabeth I, 1964) to Mueller, Marcus and Rose (Elizabeth I, 2000, 2003) have duly registered variant readings, but seem to have analysed them almost *in vacuo,* as if these texts could be considered independently from the page on which they appear. More specific and detailed investigations of the circulation of Elizabeth’s texts have been carried out, most recently, and notably, by Steven May; these, however, have been mostly limited to

the posthumous fortunes of her writings (May, 2004, 2007a–b; see also Eckhardt, 2009, pp. 1–3).

Contemporary material evidence is of significant importance for a better understanding of the real contexts of Elizabeth's poems. The texts which came to be associated with such compositions, in particular, may provide a unique insight into the early public life of Elizabeth's verses. Only a limited number of *pre*-1603 manuscript miscellanies, however, include poems by the Queen. Her lyric endeavours, in fact, seem to have known very limited circulation: some survive today in a single witness. This is the case with 'No crooked leg', which Elizabeth herself inscribed on a psalter presented to a servant or friend probably before 17 November 1558 (Elizabeth I, 2005, p. 5; on the dating of this piece see also Elizabeth I, 2003, p. 37). This is also the case with 'A hapless kind of life is this I wear' and its Latin counterpart, which were transcribed in a copy of Henry Bull's *Christian Prayers and Holy Meditations* (1570), a book once in the possession of Elizabeth's courtier and favourite Sir Thomas Heneage (Buhler, 1938). A holograph, plus what appears to be an authorially revised copy, is all we have for the verse translation from Erasmus's Latin rendering of Plutarch's *On Curiosity* (Kew, National Archives, SP 12/289 ff.90–9v and London, British Library, MS Royal 17 a 44 ff.1–12v).[1] The draft copy of this appears in the same volume which preserves the only known texts of Elizabeth's version of Boethius's *De Consolatione Philosophiae* and of her verse rendering of Horace's *De Arte Poetica* (SP 12/289, respectively ff.13–57, 64–83v and 84–8v).[2]

These appear to be private documents, personal gifts and working papers, texts which are meant to be seen only by their author, and possibly another person, the recipient of the gift or a trustworthy scribe such as Thomas Windebank,[3] who – as we find in MS Royal 17 a 44 – copied the text of the Plutarch translation 'by her Majestie's order'. Limited circulation, then, is no cause for surprise. Even while engaging in poetic exchanges with courtiers such as Ralegh or possibly Heneage (whose poem appears under the Queen's in his copy of *Christian Prayers*),[4] Elizabeth was clearly worried about indiscriminate dissemination, either in manuscript or print, of her compositions. Sir John Harington, the Queen's 'saucy godson', was aware of this: he could remember at least one occasion when someone managed to get hold of (and evidently copy) one of her poems:

> My Lady Wiloughby did covertly get it on her Majesties tablet, and had much hazard in so doing; for the Queen did find out the thief, and chid for spreading evil bruit of her writing such toyes, when

> other matters did so occupy her employment at this time; and was fearful of being thought too lightly of for so doing. (Harington, 1769, I, pp. 58–9)

One wonders if fear of royal displeasure for spreading the news 'of her writing such toyes' led to the fact that no contemporary English manuscript or printed book includes the first and longer of Elizabeth's Woodstock verses, 'Oh fortune, thy wresting, wavering state'. Notwithstanding the fact that these must have been visible on a wall, or more than one wall, of Woodstock palace (and, as the writing faded, were reproduced for the edification of the many visitors), the only extant contemporary copies were transcribed by Continental visitors to the palace between 1598 and 1600. The poem is preserved in the diaries of Thomas Platter and Baron Waldstein, and printed in Paul Hentzer's *Itinerarium* (1612).[5]

Limited circulation, however, seems not to have been unique to the poems. Even if, at least in theory, the diffusion of her prayers could have contributed to her reputation as a pious monarch, Elizabeth was certainly not pleased when Archbishop John Whitgift included one she had composed in the printed *Prayers set foorth by Authoritie* of 1597.[6] Whitgift was a member of the privy council, and a man normally on very good terms with Elizabeth (she had affectionately dubbed him her 'little black husband'). Nevertheless, she had Sir Robert Cecil write to the prelate to let him know that she was 'much troubled that her own prayer is in print' and that she wanted all copies of the book to be confiscated. Cecil even took the trouble to add a personal note to the letter, stating 'I assure you her Majesty requests this very earnestly to be done' (London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS Fairhurst 3470, f.195, quoted in May, 2007b, p. 203).

2. Bonds of association

Given the limited diffusion of Elizabeth's poetic works, the few surviving documents which include her verse should clearly be of great interest to literary historians. However, three well-known contemporary manuscript volumes, Sir John Harington's translation of *Orlando Furioso* (London, British Library, MS Add. 18920), Robert Commander's 'Booke of Heraldrye' (British Library, MS Egerton 2642) and Thomas Aldwell's miscellany (London, Inner Temple, Petyt MS 538.10), have so far escaped – at least as regards the collocation the Queen's verses – careful analysis of their contents.

The first of these manuscripts contains (on f.322, among the notes to book XLV) the couplet 'Much suspected by me, / Nothing proved can be'. Interestingly, this dates from the same period of imprisonment at Woodstock which prompted 'Oh fortune, thy wresting, wavering state', a poem which, as seen above, does not appear to have circulated during Elizabeth's lifetime.[7] Harington's *Orlando*, instead, had a significant diffusion; it was eventually printed in 1591 and dedicated to Elizabeth, who evidently did not oppose the inclusion of her verses in Harington's notes. The book was evidently known at court, given that Harington presented large-paper copies, some of them hand-coloured, to potential patrons and friends, including William Cecil and Sir Thomas Coningsby (Scott-Warren, 2004, 2001, pp. 50–1).

If one objects that this couplet is hardly a poem, the context of this and its earlier appearances deserves attention. In Harington's manuscript (which was also the copy from which the book was set; Greg, 1966, pp. 95–109) these lines are used as an example 'of chawnge of fortunes', and are themselves put in context by associating Elizabeth's fate with that of 'Lewis the xij of France and Mathias Corvyno of Hungary', two princes who went from being prisoners to being kings.[8] It is worthy of note that after briefly relating Elizabeth's vicissitudes, Harington reveals his source of information, Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*; in fact, as he goes on to explain, 'the fyrst worke I did after I cowld wryte latten was to translate that story [i.e., that of Elizabeth's imprisonment and final delivery] out of the booke of Martirs'.[9] Elizabeth's couplet in fact, had already appeared not only in John Foxe's very popular *Actes and Monuments* (1563, sig.2nd 4N7v), but also in publications as widespread as Holinshed's *Chronicles* (1587, vol.3, sig.5S2), and in Anthony Munday's *A Watch-Woord to Englande* (1584, sig.I1). In all these books, the text is quoted in the discussion of Elizabeth's dangerous situation during her imprisonment in the Tower and at Woodstock in 1554–5, a situation in which – as Foxe, Holinshed and Munday underline – she found herself chiefly due to her admirable upholding of the true Protestant faith (Starkey, 2001, pp. 143–68).

An aura of both religious and historical *exemplum*, then, frames what was the earliest poetical fruit of Elizabeth's invention to circulate in England. Providential tinges and instructive episodes of the past (recent and distant) also surround, in some contemporary witnesses, another poem by the Queen, 'The doubt of future foes'.[10] This may seem odd, as this poem gives little reason to be considered a paradigm of pious conduct or virtuous behaviour. As Steven May (2007b), Davide del Bello (2011) and Jennifer Summit (2003, pp. 67–96) have observed, this text

'offered a deadly message in a coded language' (Summit 2003, p. 92). Shortly, as all 'will see', the 'daughter of debate' (i.e., Mary Queen of Scots) will meet her destiny: Elizabeth's 'rusty sword' will soon find employment 'to poll their tops who seek such change or gape for future joy' (ll.8, 11, 14–15). It is a short step indeed from cutting off a tree top to beheading a political rival; nevertheless, in Robert Commander's 'Booke of Heraldrye', this poem is contextualized in a very different framework.

Commander (d.1613) was Rector of Tarporley, Cheshire, and Chaplain to Sir Henry Sidney (the courtier, Lord deputy of Ireland, and father of Sir Philip).[11] His miscellany, London, British Library, MS Egerton 2642 (*c.*1570–1602), is entitled 'The Booke of Heraldrye and other thinges togither with the Order of Coronacions'. The 'other things' are indeed many: in addition to some writings on heraldry, we find a quantity of historical items, together with some poems. In this manuscript 'The doubt of future foes' appears on f.237v; it is preceded by moral verses on the vanity of the world (f.227), Latin and English epigrams, verses against the Papacy and the Church of Rome, (ff.229–30), an ironic description of the life and customs of the Roman curia (f.234) verses against the French King Henri of Valois, the well-known 'The State of France as Now it Stands' (ff.234v–5, here headed 'translated oute of frenche into Englyshe Anno Domini 1585'), invectives against Commander's rival Hugh Shadwell (ff.234v, 236),[12] some verse translations of texts from Propertius, Horace and Alamannus on the love of gold, a transcription from Gower's *Vox Clamantis* and some English verses, both dealing with the 'infortunate tyme' of Richard II's reign (f.236v). The recto of the folio containing Elizabeth's poem bears a Latin eulogy ('in Laudem Reginae Elizabeth') and the sententious 'Dicta Lydanorum' (f.237); on the verso appear 'Certen verses made by the Queenes moste excellent Ma*ies*tie against the Rebells in the north *par*tes of England, and in Norfolke *and* other places of the Realme, A*nn*o Dom*ini* 1569 et 1570' (f.237v). On f.238, after a short 'Pia postulatio' for Elizabeth we find a series of considerations (taken from or inspired by Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*) entitled 'Problemata Aristotelis de Remedijs vtramq*ue* fortune'.

Elizabeth's poem is clearly seen here in the context of moral conduct (from that of someone like Shadwell, who – through some influential acquaintances – managed to obtain an office under the Council of Wales, to that of kings and Heads of State);[13] it is also seen in the context of religious controversy, and just as in *De Casibus virorum illustrorum* or as in the *Mirror for Magistrates*, in the light of the cases of great men and

women of English and European history. No matter its contents, 'The doubt of future foes' becomes a text which may be also read alongside Aristotle, Propertius, Horace, Gower; it is turned into honest words which can be compared against specific instances of corruption, and set next to records of Elizabeth's clemency: an exemplary composition from a virtuous, pious and sage monarch. The arrangement of the companion texts in this manuscript, in short, subscribes to Elizabeth's political agenda.

A copy of both 'The doubt of future foes' and the only contemporary text of 'Ah Silly Pug' (the well-known answer to Sir Walter Ralegh's 'Fortune hath taken thee away my love') are contained in another manuscript, now preserved in the library of the Inner Temple, London (first transcribed, from this manuscript, in Black, 1968, p. 535). Ff.1–81 of MS Petyt 538.10 were once one volume, containing a formulary of petitions and letters, dating from 1583 to 1591, quite probably compiled by Francis Alford (*c.*1530–92), a civil lawyer and Member of Parliament (Davies, 1972, II, p. 714). While the later rebinding has confused its original foliation, the initial section of three flyleaves has been preserved intact. Later additions were made on these pages, written in a single hand, possibly that of Thomas Aldwell whose signature appears on ff.3 and 81. The watermark which appears on f.3 has been found on documents dating between 1587 and 1596.[14] Aldwell's name can be found associated to legal documents and maps dating from the 1600s and 1620s, and at least one leaf which was apparently added to the volume (f.33) bears an early seventeenth-century watermark.[15] Most of the texts on ff.1–3v, however, date from the 1580s–90s; this might suggest that they were collected during Aldwell's youth (or late youth).[16]

The first three folios of MS Petyt 538.10 make up a very short but peculiarly attractive verse miscellany. Most of its contents, especially the texts on ff.2–3, have not hitherto been clearly identified. The miscellany includes on f.1 a sententious epitaph on William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke (1506/7–1570) by Lodowick Lloyd (fl.1573–1607), followed on f.2 by Latin adages attributed to Pope Pius II, first published in Bartolomeo Platina's *Liber de vita Christi ac Pontificum Omnium*, Venice, 1479 (see May and Ringler, 2004, n. 32257). On f.3 we find some English and Latin epigrams or short moral verses (e.g., 'I desire no riches no treasure no store[,] but I desire the grace of god and I desire no more'), including quotations from the Bible ('Sermo oportunus est optimus', from *Proverbs* 15.23 [a word spoken in due season, how good is it]) and from Ovid ('Qui non est hodie eras minus aptus erit', *Remedia Amoris,* 94 [He who is not prepared today will be less so tomorrow]). One of

the noteworthy features of this manuscript is the inclusion of sentences taken from funeral monuments and wall inscriptions, such as the lines (on f.3) from the monument of Richard Fox (1447/8–1528), Bishop of Winchester and founder of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, which begin 'Clarus wintoniae praesul cognomine Foxus'[17] and those (on the same folio) from the walls of an almshouse in Berkshire.[18] One also finds traditional and memorable sayings on moderation (including the trite Horatian 'est modus in rebus'),[19] verses on the importance of charity, on the transitory nature of worldly life and man's riches (May and Ringler, 2004, n. 2807, 23971 and 7410) and even an intelligent suggestion for quiet living: 'quarrell with no man better nor worse / beate not his bones but pinche him by the purse' (May and Ringler, 2004, n. 19205).

Before turning to the last three entries of f.3 (the anonymous 'O Quene whose Scepter prudentlie doth Scotland now defend', Elizabeth's 'Ah silly pugge' and another composition by an unknown author, 'The begger which from dore to dore doth wander'), it is interesting to move on to the verso of the same folio, where the text of 'The doubt of future foes' is found. This is preceded by 'My mind to me a kingdom is',[20] and followed by Thomas Howell's 'The higher estate the greater fear' and Dyer's 'The lowest trees have tops'. The moral content of Howell's poem is evident from its title, and the one following it, Dyer's 'The lowest trees', is almost a patchwork of *sententiae*; 'My mind to me a kingdom is', with its advice not to care much about 'the princelie pompe' and 'welthie store', and to be content with what one has, may look like a wise man's recipe for a tranquil, moderate, life. Thus, the poems which appear next to 'The doubt of future foes', are quite fitting with the texts of the preceding folios – rather, they seem to be the ideal companions for this poem. They are elegant and decent compositions by a well-behaved poet (Howell) and well-known courtiers. Dyer's 'The lowest trees have tops' even manages to contextualize Elizabeth's menacing reference to polling trees' tops within a more reassuring moral framework.[21]

Turning back to Elizabeth's famous answer poem, this is the only extant copy in a contemporary manuscript.[22] It is preceded by what seems to be a dedication to the Queen of a Biblical translation ('O Quene whose Scepter'; May and Ringler, 2004, n. 17522). Given the mention of a 'famous kinge and prophet' who was the original author of these verses – clearly King David – this may very well have been a translation from the Psalms. The reference to the greatest King and Poet in the Bible is here significant: like James I, who loved to be associated with the image of David, Elizabeth here becomes a religious poetess, and,

possibly, in Aldwell's mind, a merciful Queen, given the appearance of a supplication immediately following her text ('The begger which from dore to dore doth wander'; May and Ringler, 2004, n. 21866).

Enigmatically, the text of Elizabeth's 'Ah silly pugge' on f.3 and the note on its left ('Per Reginam/Walter Rawley') are crossed out.[23] One may think of two explanations for this. In the first place one may note that 'per reginam' means 'by the queen' and, if this note is understood correctly, Ralegh is thus clearly identified as the object (and not the author) of the poem.[24] This text, consequently, may have been deleted as not fitting the 'moral' verses in the same manuscript: 'Ah silly pugge' may appear like an invitation to be constant, but what if one thinks of the addressee – the 'best hated man' in the realm, Sir Walter Ralegh? Alternatively, one may speculate that the supplication under Elizabeth's poem, when first transcribed, was thought to be by Ralegh: these texts, in other words, were perceived as companion poems. Copying does not always mean paying real attention to content, and incipits can be misleading; the following lines could, after all, be a supplication from a courtier:

> The begger w*hi*ch from dore to dore doth wander with his mate
> Doth live in better case then I, because he knoweth his state
> I live in hope and still am fed, w*i*th wordes but others gaine
> the thinge w*hi*ch longe I loked for, the greater is my paine.
>
> (f.3)

The rest, however, is quite in line with a poor man's request: on reading this more attentively, the compiler of the manuscript had second thoughts. He left the supplication, but deleted Elizabeth's text, possibly with the intention of copying it elsewhere once in possession of the real companion poem.[25]

Whatever the reason, the details of this manuscript, including this deletion, and perhaps especially *because* of this deletion, present a consistent image of the Queen: Elizabeth, the virgin and virtuous monarch, is here also a moralist. This is yet another way of moderating the disquieting tones of the poem on f.3v, 'the doubt of future foes', and implicitly endorsing its political intentions.

3. Doubts and agenda

Politics may play an important role in the order and disposition of texts, as well as determine the inclusion of a certain item in a manuscript

anthology. To quote but an instance, one may return for a moment to Sir John Harington's anecdote quoted above. The poem 'Lady Willoughby' copied from the Queen's tablet was, in fact, 'The doubt of future foes'. Harington evidently kept a copy of it for himself, and Elizabeth's composition duly appears in the Arundel Harington Manuscript on f.164v. The identity of the person who 'stole' this text is of extreme relevance in this case: 'Lady Wiloughby' was quite probably Lady Anne Neville Greville (d.1583), wife of Fulke Greville, Lord Willoughby, and mother of the poet Sir Fulke Greville, Harington's good friend. Anne was the daughter of Ralph Neville, fourth earl of Westmorland; her brother Henry, the fifth earl, had served under Mary I as lieutenant general of the North and had been a well-known supporter of hers. His son, Charles, Anne's nephew, was the notorious sixth earl of Westmorland, the rebel of the northern uprising of 1569.[26] Another, even if slightly less probable, candidate may be Katherine Willoughby, duchess of Suffolk (1519–80). The duchess's protestant zeal, which made her relations with the Queen strained at times, was well known throughout the realm: she was a patron of puritan preachers and intellectuals (Wabuda, 2004).[27] Though with possibly opposing (or with very similar) motivations, both Katherine and Anne Willoughby may have been very interested in a poem related to Mary Queen of Scots. Political motives may be behind the inclusion of a poem such as this, even in an apparently politically 'neutral' verse miscellany.

The politics of the circulation of this text are intriguing indeed. Elizabeth, in fact, may have not been as upset about the 'theft' of a copy of this poem as Harington's narrative would make us believe. Stemmatic analysis of the relatively numerous contemporary copies of this poem,[28] has identified three lines of descent for 'The doubt of future foes':[29] this suggests that Elizabeth did mean to 'publish' this poem by circulating it in multiple copies. While this seems to have happened very rarely with her poetic compositions, it was the treatment she reserved to some of her most important public speeches, such as the one she gave at the close of the 1576 parliamentary session, which circulated widely in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century (Elizabeth I, 2005, pp. 52–60). The political importance of this poem must have been very clear to the Queen, and probably to her subjects as well.

While very dissimilar in scope and making, the three manuscripts by Harington, Commander and Aldwell present Elizabeth's texts in association with moral verse or edifying narration; her poems are framed by *optimi scriptores* and exemplary writings which seem to provide an ideal reference for the political discourse they promote. The cases of

Add. 18920, Egerton 2642 and MS Petyt 538.10 are instructive: these are, in fact, not private collections, but books which were either meant to be printed (as Harington's *Orlando*) or consulted. The Egerton and Petyt volumes provided practical models for letters and/or useful historical information which readers of more than one generation may have wanted to have access to. Inscribing a text in these books equalled to make it public; inserting it into a particular context, to give it a specific significance.

Turning to surviving material evidence to find traces of a contemporary reader's perception of a text can be fascinating; it can tell much about the significance of a written work for the men and women of its time, and thus help to form a clearer picture of the literary history of a period. This, however, can be done only by paying attention to both the texts and their physical embodiment, by examining as attentively as possible the original documents, including their structure and *mise en page*. Many of the books containing the poetic compositions of Elizabeth I still await systematic scrutiny, in particular of the relationships existing between the individual items they contain. As recent scholarship has demonstrated (most recently, and notably, Eckhardt, 2009), the analysis of manuscript sources from such a perspective has certainly much to reveal; certainly it will not disappoint those who want to read into the Queen's 'passing sweete and harmonicall' verses.

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Notes

1. For the identification of the source text as Erasmus's Latin version see Elizabeth I, 2009c, pp. 370–84.
2. Elizabeth I, 2009c, pp. 72, 462. On the translation of Boethius see also Elizabeth I, 2009a. The verse sections, intriguingly, are entered in Elizabeth's hand. It should also be noted that the choral ode from *Hercules Oetaeus* (attributed to Seneca in the Renaissance) is preserved and attributed to Elizabeth in a unique scribal copy *ante* 1620 (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS e. Museo 55, ff.48–9); cf. May 2004, p. 295; Elizabeth I, 2009b, p. 447.
3. Sir Thomas Windebank (*c.*1550–1607), Clerk of the Signet from 1565 to his death, was a protégé of William Cecil, Lord Burghley. By the 1590s he was acting as Elizabeth's confidential secretary (Quintrell, 2004).

4. See Bajetta, 1998, pp. 174–80, 265–75; Buhler, 1938, pp. 248–9; May, 1999, pp. 342–3. For a Latin poetic exchange with the German humanist Paul Schede, see May, 1999, p. 134; Phillips, 1963; Elizabeth I, 2000, p. 201.
5. Elizabeth I, 2000, pp. 45–6, n. 1. A Brandenburg-born lawyer, Hentzner (1558–1623) had served as tutor to a son of Duke Karl of Silesia, and had accompanied him on a Grand Tour of Germany, France, England (in August and September 1598) and Italy between 1596 and 1600. As Dana F. Sutton has observed in his admirable electronic edition, 'the volume Hentzner published clearly has its origin in a diary he kept along the way, carefully recording dates, times of day, and distances travelled' (Hentzner, 2004, introduction, par. 3).
6. *Certaine prayers set foorth by authoritie to be vsed for the prosperous successe of Her Maiesties forces and nauy* was printed in London by the deputies of Christopher Barker. Barker, a protégé of Sir Francis Walsingham, had been the Queen's printer since September 1577, an office he kept until his death in 1599; his deputies at this time were George Bishop, Ralph Newberry and Barker's own son Robert (Kathman, 2004). Sponsored by the Archbishop of Canterbury and printed at this press, this book could not but be associated with the Queen's own will.
7. May, 2004, pp. 2–4. The following conventions have been followed when transcribing from manuscript: the original spelling (including i/j, u/v) and punctuation and capitalization have been retained; superscripts have been lowered silently; contractions have been expanded and italicized.
8. London, British Library, Add. MS 18920, f.321v. Of such a 'kynde of sudden chawnge', Harington goes on to comment 'owr realme hath one example; that passeth not only thease, but all I thinke that have been herd of, or written, and that ys the Queens most excellent ma*ies*tie that now ys, who from the expectation of a most vndeserved death, came to the possessyon of a most renowed kyndome' (f.321v). Except for occasional deviations from Harington's idiosyncratic spelling, the text is identical to that of the printed edition (Harington, 1591, sig.2L2).
9. British Library, MS Additional 18920, f.321v. The 'story' is very probably the tract *The Miraculous preservation of the Lady Elizabeth, now Queen of England*, which was appended to Foxe's *Actes and Monuments*. In a side note to his Orlando (Additional 18920, f.321v; sig.2L2 in the printed edition), Harington stated that 'this litle book was given vnto her Maiestie'. The volume, however, is no longer extant; see also Scott-Warren, 2004.
10. See e.g., Washington, Folger Shakespeare Library, MS V b 317, ff.1–23. Here one finds papers chiefly from the mid-late 1570s relating to Mary Queen of Scots (f.1), but also sermons, documents concerning contemporary religious controversies (the Vestiarian crisis in particular, cf. ff.3v–5v), letters by important prelates of the realm (including a missive from Tobie Matthew, later, archbishop of York, to Robert Dudley Earl of Leicester 'having gaine occasion of offence in a sermon at Pauls crosse *con*cerning succession', f.11v), excerpts from Matthew's prayers (12v–16v) and, near the text of Elizabeth's poem (f.20v), supplications (17–18v), orations (19) and Latin letters to the Queen and to Leicester (21–22v).
11. Henry Sidney was also President of the Council in the Marches of Wales, from 1559 to his death in 1586; see also below. On this manuscript and its compiler see May and Ringler, 2004, I, p. 174; Woudhuysen, 1996, p. 165.

12. On Shadwell, a former servant of Henry Sidney's father-in-law see Longleat House, Dudley Papers II (1571–88), ff.131 and 162.
13. See Longleat House, Dudley Papers II, f.131 (March 1572/3). Thanks to his letters of recommendation from the Earls of Warwick and Leicester, Shadwell became Marshal of the Court of the Marches *c.*1575; see Flenley, 1916, pp. 26 and 109–10.
14. Not in Briquet, 1968, nor in Heawood, 1950, but similar to 'Word.006.1' in Mosser, Sullivan, Hatfield and Radcliffe, 1996–2010, found on some of the Bagot Papers: Washington, Folger Shakespeare Library L.a.315 (1587) and L.a.10 (1596).
15. Similar to Heawood, 1950, n. 660. On the original foliation see Davies, 1972, I, pp. 713–14.
16. One 'Thomas Aldwell, gent.' is mentioned in the post mortem inquistion of George Price, gentleman as tenant of a messuage in the parish of St Dunstan-in-the-West, near Whitefriars, London (Fry, 1908, Pt. 3, pp. 279–311). In February 1617/18 the steward and copyholders of the manor of Paris Garden, London, ordered 'that a perfecte true and exacte surveye shalbe taken [...] of this Manor before the next generall Courte and a plott exactly and fairely made'. Thomas Aldwell, gentleman, was appointed to make the map, which, however, was not presented until December, 1627, when Aldwell received £5 for his work (Kew, PRO, SP 38/15). A copy inscription to a map of Cranborne Chase bounds, surveyed (1618) by Thomas Aldwell, is in the Dorset History Centre, D/PIT/L6. It is difficult to know if this was the same Thomas Aldwell who worked for the East India Company and was Purser of the ship *Comfort* whose will was proved on 29 August 1635 (National Archives, Kew, PROB 11/168); given that his wife's name is mentioned here as 'Margaret', this is clearly not the same Aldwell who married Agnes Jeffrey on 18 December 1587 at Saint Bride's, Fleet Street (Parish Registers of St Bride's, Fleet Street). One cannot rule out the possibility that Aldwell transcribed the texts on ff.1–3v when he came into possession of Alford's book after the latter's death in 1592. In fact, Aldwell and Alford probably lived in the same area of London: the latter was buried at St Dunstan-in-the-West, London, on 3 September 1592 (Hartley 2004).
17. These lines state that the effigy (visible in Christ Church chapel, Oxford) is the exact representation of his person and dress. They were also printed in Paul Hentzer's *Itinerarium* (1612; see Hentzer, 2004, pt. 42).
18. 'Haec nova structura retinens habitacula plura sit permansura per tempora longa futura', entitled, to the left: 'in domo elemosinana apud Lamburne'. This inscription, a wish for the long-lasting stability of 'this new building', was once on the walls of an almshouse in Lambourn, Berkshire (probably Estbury Almshouses founded in 1501, rebuilt in 1852); see Hearne, 1906, p. 283. A later item 'the rich mans goodes will him *per*mit no quiet rest to take' may have been transcribed from the walls of an Oxford inn (May and Ringler, 2004, n. 23971). These lines, incidentally, are reminiscent of Ecclesiastes 5:12.
19. *Satires* 1.1, 106–7; translated on f.3 as 'in everything a mean there is' (May and Ringler, 2004, n. 11857; not recognized here, however, as a translation).
20. This poem may be by Sir Edward Dyer or the Earl of Oxford (May, 1975).

21. It may or not be a coincidence that in the 1570s Alford, whose collection of letters starts on f.4, had openly argued for caution in judging Mary Stuart, insisting that there was little evidence of her being privy to the plots against Elizabeth. He was 'also uncertain of the propriety of trying her, a foreign sovereign, in England [...] Though he shared this caution about the Scottish queen with Elizabeth herself, by 1586–87 he had come to support the general clamour for Mary's execution' (Hartley, 2004, par. 4). It is perhaps also worthy of note that he intended to write an account of Elizabeth I's reign, which apparently, never materialized (Hartley, 2004, par. 1).
22. Excerpts from this poem had been published in Puttenham's *Arte of English Poesie* in 1589 (3.19). In this book, the two lines quoted on sig.2A3 appear nicely surrounded by some weighty classical texts (some lines from Euripides' *Medea* and a couplet attributed to Cato) on one side, and by verses from Chaucer on the other; the section on sig.2D1 is quoted as an example of *sententia* – which, as Puttenham states, is used for 'great purposes' and 'weighty speaches'.
23. What appears an otiose flourish follows the 'r' in 'Walter'; it is possible, though, that this is meant to be an 'o', thus forming either a Latin dative or an ablative: 'to Walter Ralegh' or 'about Walter Ralegh'. The latter would possibly fit in with an attempt at further contextualising the poem by adding a piece on the supposed vicissitudes of Sir Walter. The reading of the manuscript, however, is clearly controversial: 'Walter' is the reading found in Black, 1968, p. 535, while Rudick, 1999, p. 20 has 'Waltero'.
24. A real confusion between Latin 'per' and English 'for' (see *OED*, 'per, *prep*', draft revision, June 2009), while in theory possible, does not seem, however, very likely: it would take a poor knowledge of Latin indeed to interpret 'Per Reginam' as 'For the Queen'.
25. The order of the poems may not be an objection here, as companion poems are not necessarily always copied in the correct order; Aldwell may have decided to leave the place of pre-eminence to the monarch, something which he meant to indicate in his side note 'Per Reginam / Walter Ralegh'.
26. Lady Anne's presence at court is witnessed by the inclusion of her name as 'Lady Willoughby' in the 1576 and 1577 New Year's gift rolls (London, British Library, MS Add. 4827; Kew, National Archives, C 47/3/39). She does not appear, however, on the 1571 and 1575 rolls. Unfortunately, no roll for 1570, the most likely time for her to have copied 'The doubt' from the Queen's tablet, is known to survive. I owe this information to Jane Lawson, whose edition of the gift rolls is in preparation (see also Lawson, 2007).
27. In this case, Harington was referring retrospectively to someone who had became Lady Willoughby subsequent to copying the poem. Mary, in fact, had became Lady Willoughby when she married Peregrine Bertie, son of Katherine Willoughby, Duchess of Suffolk, in 1578. Katherine's name appears as 'Lady Willoughby' starting from the New Year's gift list for 1581 (Windsor, Eton College, MS 192; I owe this information to Jane Lawson), and she is mentioned in the *The Metamorphosis of Ajax*. One should also remember that this book grew out of a convivial gathering at Wardour Castle, Wiltshire, the home of Sir Matthew Arundell (cf. Scott-Warren 2004, par. 3) whose wife was Margaret Willoughby (1544–84), gentlewoman of the

privy chamber to Mary I and Elizabeth. Margaret belonged to a protestant family (Margaret's uncle was Henry Grey, duke of Suffolk, and her cousin was Lady Jane Grey). Arundell, however, was known to have strong Catholic connections. At the accession of Queen Mary, she restored him to the greater part of the forfeited property of his father, Sir Thomas Arundell. Matthew was knighted by Elizabeth in 1574; his elder son, however, was imprisoned in 1580 for his Catholic beliefs (he was later to earn fame and glory fighting against the Turks), and his younger brother Charles was a known recusant who left England in 1583 (Cokayne, 2000, I, p. 263; Oliver, 1857, pp. 76–7; Hasler, 1981, p. 336). On the Catholic links of this branch of the Arundells, cf. Scott-Warren, 2001, p. 90 and Hopper 2004.

28. In addition to the texts found in *Nugae Antiquae* and the Petyt and Egerton manuscripts, contemporary transcribed copies include the Arundel Harington Manuscript, f.164v (cf. Hughey 1960, I, pp. 276–7; II, pp. 386–7); London, British Library, Harleian MS 6933, f.8 and Harleian MS 7392(2), f.27v; National Library of Wales, Ottley Papers; Oxford, Bodleian Library Digby MS 138, f.159 and Rawlinson Poet. MS 108, f.44v. Puttenham published a version of the poem in his *Arte of English Poesie*, sig.2E2v.
29. I am very grateful to Steven May for sharing with me his analysis of the contemporary witnesses, which revises the stemma published in 'Queen Elizabeth's Future Foes' (May 2004, pp. 1–12).

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Part II

We Princes are set on Stages: Masques and Ceremonies of Royal Self-display

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6

The Monarch as Represented in the Ceremony of Coronation

Janette Dillon

Royal entries have been much studied in recent years; but the ceremony of coronation itself has received far less attention.[1] Yet this ceremony is in a sense the primal scene of monarchical self-representation. Ceremonial royal entries in England are first recorded in the late fourteenth century, with the entry of Richard II into London; but the coronation ceremony is documented as far back as the ninth century in England, and has roots in earlier Teutonic and perhaps Celtic ceremonies.[2] The coronation ceremony as performed for Elizabeth I and James VI and I dates back almost unchanged to the fourteenth century.[3]

The monarch, as James particularly liked to emphasize, was understood to be God's deputy on earth. As he wrote in the first two lines of the sonnet summarizing the argument of his *Basilicon Doron* (first published in English in 1599):

> God gives not Kings the stile of Gods in vaine,
> For on his Throne his Scepter do they swey.
>
> (McIlwain, 1965, p. 3)

This discourse was self-evidently one of almost Christ-like elevation, one that highlighted the divine aspect of kingship and the superiority of kings and queens over their subjects. Many aspects of the discourse and practice of monarchy emphasize and reinforce this position of elevation. The well-known theory of the king's two bodies, for example, made the monarch the vessel of a sacred core of divinely-appointed kingship passed down from king to king; and numerous practices from the daily business of dining apart to the more infrequent but quasi-divine practice

of touching for the 'king's evil' embedded this recognition of the king's special elevation into everyday life.

These practices, moreover, had multiplied with the centuries, so that the special apartness of the monarch was much more firmly and fully established with the Tudors and Stuarts than it had been at an earlier date. A noted increase in such rituals was observable under Richard II, who introduced the practice of addressing the King as 'your highness' or 'your majesty' and expected his subjects to avert their gaze if he looked at them (Saul, 1997, pp. 338–42); and the distancing of majesty had continued to increase under the Tudors with what Dale Hoak has called 'a veritable cult of sacred "imperial" kingship', explicitly affirmed in the famous Act in Restraint of Appeals, passed under Henry VIII in 1533, which asserted that England was an empire (Hoak, 2003, p. 116). By the reign of Elizabeth reverence was expected even towards the absent monarch's chair of state; and a Venetian ambassador to the English court in the sixteenth century commented on what seemed to him a remarkable level of deference:

> In the royal antechamber stands a chair covered with brocade, and this antechamber they call the presence chamber, and they have such reverence for their king that they always uncover themselves in this chamber, because the chair represents the king, before whom you cannot pass without showing reverence, whoever you are in England.[4]

The coronation ceremony, however, as the ritual which, by conferring full regal status upon the monarch, dwelt upon the meaning of monarchy, enacted a much more nuanced understanding of the paradox at the heart of monarchy, though this too was to change under the Tudors. Monarchs before the twelfth century, after all, sometimes referred to themselves, like the Pope, as the *servus servorum dei* (servant of the servants of God). The traditional ceremony represented the monarch as subject to God, the laws and his people, and reminded him of his duties even as it raised him to the throne and crowned him. Indeed the *Liber Regalis* (the form of coronation finalized *c.*1375 and remaining virtually unchanged until 1685), advised the prince to spend the night before the coronation in prayer and meditation, pondering especially this text from Ecclesiastes (32.1): 'If thou be made the master, lift not thyself up, but be among them as one of the rest'. And James VI's sonnet followed its opening proclamation of the elevation of kings with a turn to the paradox of humility before God:

> And as their subjects ought them to obey,
> So Kings should feare and serve their god againe.

This essay seeks to show how both the script and the material practices of coronation (in theatrical terms, its costumes, props, movements and spatial construction) shift between images of elevation and abjection in handling the paradoxical status and meaning of monarchy.

1. The ceremonial space

The royal entry into London for the coronation, which has commanded so much attention from scholars, took place on a Saturday; but the coronation itself, the true highlight of this set of events, took place on the Sunday in Westminster Abbey. The ceremonies began, however, in Westminster Hall. Both buildings were heavily invested symbolic structures, which were carefully dressed, indeed transformed, for the purposes of this day. We can begin exploring the mix of elevation and subjection in the ceremony via the setting up and use of space. The king first had to be raised up on to the Marble Chair of the King's Bench, at the south end (the dais end) of Westminster Hall, under a canopy of estate, in a custom that has been compared with the ancient Teutonic custom of raising the new chieftain on a shield.[5] The dais end of the Hall, already literally and symbolically the 'highest' in any hall, was further dignified and enhanced on that day by the special adornments of cushions and cloth of gold and by the covering of that whole end of the Hall in cloth of red worsted.

Preparations in the Abbey were more extensive. As with the dais in Westminster Hall, the location of the altar already determined the symbolic focus of elevation, but specific divisions within the sacred space were made clearer and more emphatic on this day. The crossing (the open space in a church where the transept crosses the nave), built in Westminster Abbey with a view to the hosting of coronations, was especially spacious, and was known as the 'theatre'. Around this area was a triforium (a gallery in the wall over the arches) with capacity for several hundred spectators; and in the centre was constructed for the occasion a special stage, known as the Siege Royal, mounted by steps on all sides and guarded by ushers (see Figure 6.1).[6] The height of the stage could be considerable, and there might be as many as twenty steps from the Abbey floor to the scaffold stage. The whole stage and the steps up to it were covered in red cloth, and overhung by a silk canopy, though the richness can be understood only through the detail. For the coronation

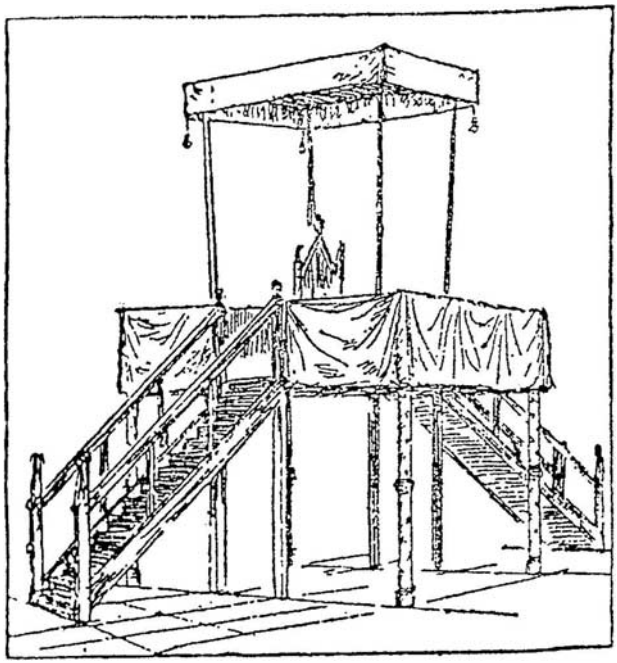


Figure 6.1 The Siege Royal: a reconstruction produced by W. R. Lethaby for his *Westminster Abbey Re-Examined* (London: Duckworth, 1925, p. 268) © The British Library Board

of Edward VI, for example, the Siege Royal was covered in gold-striped crimson satin, trimmed with red ribbons and gold silk lace, held in place by 40,000 special finishing nails, including 8000 of silver gilt (Hoak, 2003, p. 124). Special closets were also built for the king (and the queen too if it was a double coronation) to change their robes before departing from the Abbey (see Figures 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4).

A chair of state was placed on the stage, facing the altar (and if there was a second chair of state for a queen consort, it was one or two steps lower than the king's). The monarch's chair was placed on a further platform which might add a further ten steps in height to that of the stage (de Guaras, 1892, p. 120). Between the stage and the altar, in a part of the Abbey known, for the purposes of coronation, as the 'area', was King Edward's Chair, richly decorated for the occasion (see Figure 6.5), and to one side of it, on the south side of the area, was a 'faldstool', a moveable folding stool or desk at which the monarch knelt for certain parts

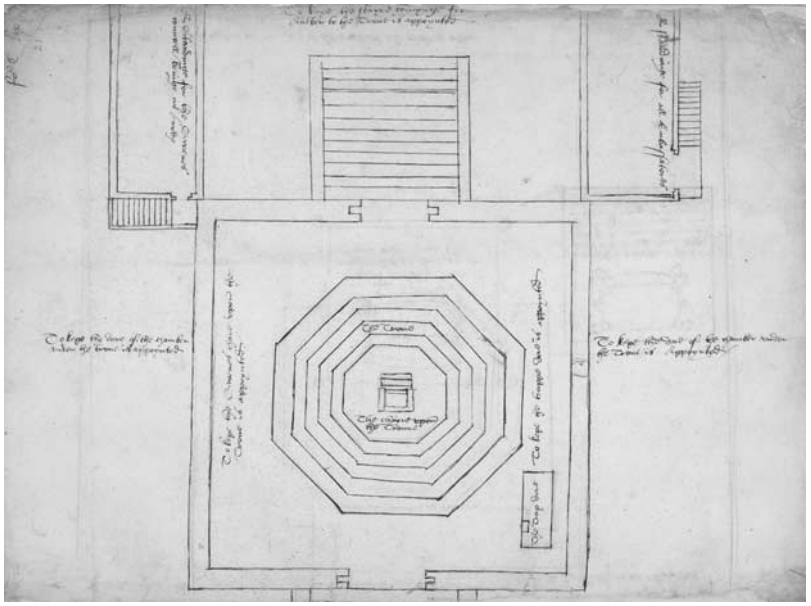


Figure 6.2 Westminster Abbey as prepared for the coronation of Elizabeth I: the 'Siege Royal'; British Library, Egerton MS 3320, f.21r © The British Library Board

of the ceremony.[7] The co-existence of these two kinds of seat, throne and stool, already symbolizes in little the dialogue between dignity and humility germane to the whole ceremony.

A runner of blue ray cloth stretched the distance of nearly one third of a mile from the Marble Chair in Westminster Hall right into the Abbey, to the west door of the choir, so that the monarch walked and sat throughout the day only on rich and specially laid cloth. This ceremonial covering again spoke of a tension between high and low. Whilst walking only on special cloth might seem to set the monarch apart and above his people, it may have originated in the fact that kings first came barefoot to be crowned. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the king actually wore stockings in place of shoes, but the absence of full or rich footwear retained the symbolism of lowliness. Other aspects of his dress on this day similarly brought together strands of humility and majesty, as he had to be dressed in garments that could easily be unlaced for the anointing of his breast, back and shoulders, but were nevertheless covered for part of the ceremony by richly ornamented over-garments.[8]

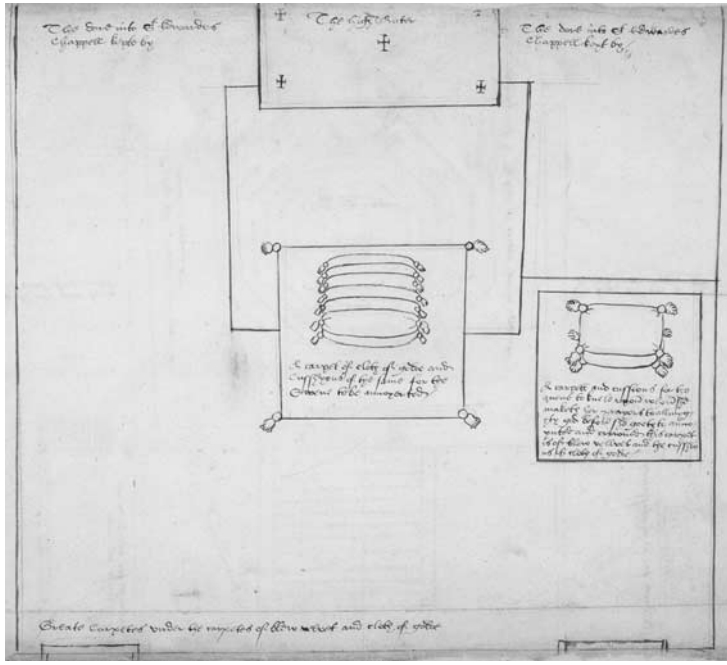


Figure 6.3 Westminster Abbey as prepared for the coronation of Elizabeth I: the 'area' and high altar; British Library, Egerton MS 3320, f.21v © The British Library Board

2. The ceremony

As Leopold Wickham Legg has written, '[t]he object of the coronation service was the confirmation of the elected prince as King. Until the person elected had been anointed and crowned he was not King' (Legg, 1901, p. xv). The ceremony was thus divided into three parts. The first part asks the people whether they accept this prince as their monarch and extracts promises from the prince to uphold the laws and defend the church and people. The second and most important part is the anointing, the process by which the prince, in becoming king, ceases to be fully a layperson and becomes a *persona mixta*, part layman and part cleric. This part of the ceremony very much resembled the consecration of a bishop, minus the imposition of hands (Legg, 1901, pp. xvi–xviii). And the final part consisted of investing the king with the ornaments of office and enthroning and crowning him. These different parts of the

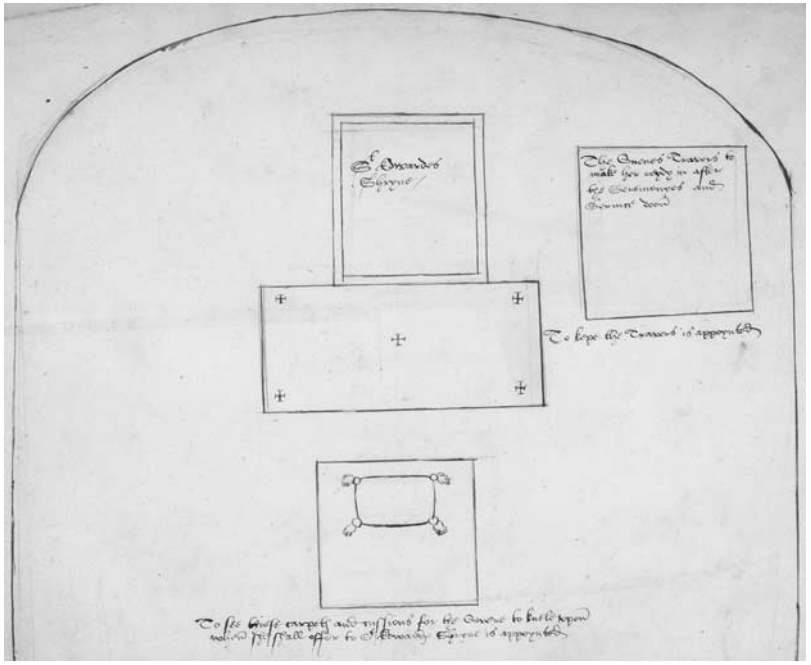


Figure 6.4 Westminster Abbey as prepared for the coronation of Elizabeth I: the Shrine of St Edward; British Library, Egerton MS 3320, f.22r © The British Library Board

ceremony took different stances towards the king. The first part subjected him. Though his so-called election by the people was a matter of form by the time of the Tudors, even as a form it enacts the subjection of the monarch to the people's approval. His every movement from the point of leaving Westminster Hall for the Abbey was carefully prescribed. He processed to the south side of the stage, making reverence before the altar as he passed in front of the stage, and was supported throughout the ceremony by the Abbot or Dean of Westminster, whose job it was to guide the king through the ceremonial process. When all members of the procession were in their appointed places the Archbishop of Canterbury brought the king forward on the stage and turned to all sides to ask the people if they would accept this prince as their king. The king also had to turn to the people on all sides so that they might see him and respond. The Little Device (the recognized 'script' for the ceremony on successive occasions) prescribes the proper question and response: 'Will ye syrs at this tyme give your willes and assentes to



Figure 6.5 The Coronation Chair, Westminster Abbey © Dean and Chapter of Westminster

the same consecracion, inunction and coronacion, wherunto the people shall saye with a great voice, yea, yea, yea, so be it, King Henry, King Henry, King Henry'.[9]

Officers of the court now covered the 'area' with carpets and cushions while the Archbishop and assisting bishops put on their vestments in preparation for the unction. The king was led by the archbishop, the bishops of Durham and Bath and the abbot of Westminster to make an offering at the altar before prostrating himself on the cushioned area before it. The archbishop read a prayer over him, after which he rose and sat in a chair facing the altar to swear the oath; and following this he again prostrated himself. He remained 'grovelling' (this is the term used in the early documents) for a significant part of the ceremony, his bodily position expressing more fully than any words his humility before God.[10] Throughout the coronation ceremonies the importance of placing and movement in the vertical plane is evident. The king's kneeling and prostration before the altar here importantly reverse the

first ceremonial highlight of the day, in Westminster Hall, when he was literally raised up by his noblemen on to the king's bench, the practice known as the Elevation. Where that earlier moment embodied his superiority over his lords, the present moment expressed his obedience to a higher authority. The fact that the king's body is the one that does most of the moving between positions, however, also contributes to the construction of his dominant status within the shape of the event. His unique ability to move between the two constructs his body as regal rather than merely human.

The archbishop administered the oath to the king, who swore that he would defend the laws and liberties of church and people, keep peace between them and be just and merciful to them.[11] The king was then ceremonially disrobed to his shirt and breeches and anointed with oil and chrism in five places: on the head, hands, breast, inside the elbows and on the shoulders and back.[12] A queen would have worn a front-opening surcoat in place of a king's specially laced shirt. In older versions of the ceremony, the archbishop literally tore off his shirt, but later practice was to unlace it and lace it back up. Clearly the state of undress, like the bare feet and prostration, was a humbling position, designed to remind the king of his very human body before the sacramental oil transformed him into a being closer to God. The precise status of the monarch after unction, however, had long been acknowledged to be problematic and remained a subject of debate under the Tudors. As Charlemagne asked: 'What does the Sacrament of Coronation make me?' Anointing elevated a king above all other men, but did not raise him 'above, nor even to the level of that of the priest, or give the power to perform any prestly [*sic*] office.'[13]

Some monarchs, including the later Plantagenets and all monarchs after Charles I, received unction sitting in King Edward's Chair, but the Tudors knelt to receive it. The monarch was hidden from sight for this part of the ceremony by a canopy held over him by four Knights of the Garter. Notably, then, the most sacred moment of the ceremony was also the most private. It was not thought fit to make the king's humbling semi-nakedness visible to all and sundry.[14] The abbot of Westminster dried the excess oil with a cloth which was later burnt, and the Lord Great Chamberlain placed a linen coif on the monarch's head that was worn for eight days after the anointing. A particularly humbling moment for Henry IV must have been the very human physical consequence of this: namely an extreme infestation of headlice.[15] And this was particularly ironic in his case, since his shaky claim to the throne led him to alter the ceremonial of anointing in a very marked

way. He refused to conceal himself under a canopy as tradition directed and, instead of walking from the altar to the throne, had himself 'elevated and transported like the consecrated host', both alterations that substituted superiority for modesty at key moments (Hunt, 2008, p. 16).

The king was now robed for the coronation itself and crowned in his chair before the altar by the archbishop of Canterbury. The crown of St Edward on the altar was blessed, and investment with the regalia, including the crown, ring, sword, pallium (royal mantle), sceptre and rod was ceremonially performed with all due rites. As the monarch was crowned all the peers put on their coronets, the kings of arms their crowns and the archbishops and bishops their caps. The king was kissed by each of the bishops as he sat in his chair before the altar and was then escorted by all the peers and bishops in their due order, while the archbishop and choir sang *Te Deum*, to his throne on the stage, where he received homage and fealty from them.[16] Having been thoroughly humbled prior to and through the process of anointing, he was now elevated to the position of supreme head of church and state, receiving the reverence of all below him, including those same prelates who had supported, guided and anointed him in the earlier part of the ceremony.

Mass was sung and the king received the sacrament before returning to his throne. At the end of the mass the king processed as before, with all the lords spiritual and temporal in attendance, to the altar before the Shrine of St Edward, behind the high altar, where the archbishop removed the crown of St Edward from the monarch's head and placed it on the altar. The king then withdrew into his traverse and changed into the robes of estate and the Imperial crown before leaving for Westminster Hall, again in full procession.

3. Changes

As indicated above, the coronation ceremony remained virtually unchanged between 1308 and 1685, despite seismic changes in the church and in relations between the church and the monarchy.[17] That said, however, those few changes that there were tended to move, as one might expect, away from subjection and towards elevation. Subjection to God, after all, took the form of obedience to the church, and in a period when the monarchy was struggling to assert its rule over the church, such traditional humility looked less and less attractive. The most significant changes were in the oath and in the attitude towards anointing. At Elizabeth's coronation, most strikingly, it would seem that the text of the oath was not delivered to the officiating Bishop of Carlisle

until the very point of administering it during the ceremony itself, when William Cecil, her secretary, emerged to hand it to the Bishop (see Alford, 2008, p. 96 and Hoak, 2003, p. 150). There is no record of the oath Elizabeth swore, but it may have included a line sworn by James I at his coronation, undertaking to rule 'according to the Laws of God, [and] the true profession of the Gospel established in this Kingdom' (see Hunt, 2008, pp. 156–7).

For the coronation of Edward VI Archbishop Cranmer changed the words he spoke in presenting the King to the people in order to play down the role of election and insist on the prince as created King by divine agency rather than human consent. He changed the words of the oath to enhance royal prerogative in place of the idea of the king as the servant of church and people; and he further played down the significance of anointment in his sermon: 'The oil, if added', he said, 'is but a ceremony: if it be wanting, that king is yet a perfect monarch notwithstanding, and God's anointed, as well as if he was inoiled.'[18] Elizabeth I reportedly 'disliked the ceremony and ridiculed it; for when she withdrew, according to the custom, to put on the royal garments, it is reported that she said to the noble ladies in attendance upon her: "Away with you, the oil is stinking." '[19] Mary Tudor, by contrast, sent to the Emperor for newly consecrated oil.

Aloisio Schivenoglia, an Italian eyewitness to the coronation of Elizabeth I, notes her warmth at the conclusion of the ceremonies with disapproval:

> The mass and all the ceremonies being concluded [. . .] they returned into Westminster Hall in the same order as at first, except that the clergy and the bishops remained in the Abbey; her Majesty carrying in her hand the sceptre and orb, and wearing the ample royal robe of cloth of gold. She returned very cheerfully, with a most smiling countenance for every one, giving them all a thousand greetings, so that in my opinion she exceeded the bounds of gravity and decorum. (*Calendar of State Papers. Venetian*, 1864–1947, Volume 7, #10, p. 17)

In his eyes, this Queen showed insufficient distance from her people. But Elizabeth's well-known warmth towards her people on public occasions was a strategic choice. Though she may have appeared to be a 'queen of hearts' at such moments, she was not in fact letting go of any of her sovereign power or downplaying her own specialness as queen, but rather highlighting it by playing out these carefully cultivated performances of accessibility. The more accessible and loveable she made

herself look on select occasions, the more firmly and stubbornly she could insist on overruling her people when it mattered. When courtiers or people really tried to speak out or change policy, as John Stubbs did over the question of marriage or Peter Wentworth did on the question of free speech they quickly felt the force of her will.[20]

James I, as is equally well known, hated public appearances and refused to court popularity in this way. He found his entry into London for the coronation unendurable and vowed never to undergo such another day. His impatience with those who wanted to see him was legendary, and his understanding of himself as God's vicegerent on earth took the form of open contempt for the people: 'God's wounds!' he is reported to have sworn, 'I will pull down my breeches and they shall also see my arse' (Sir John Oglander, cited in Dutton, 1995, p. 22). The course of monarchy, originally understood as balancing powers with duties, was set towards a continuing shift towards elevation and away from humility or obedience. It was, indeed, on course ultimately for civil war.

Notes

1. Alice Hunt's excellent recent study of the coronation, *The Drama of Coronation* (2008), which appeared a few months after I began work on this paper, may mark a resurgence of interest.
2. The earliest extant coronation *ordo*, known as the Egbert/Leofric *ordo*, is dated to the first half of the ninth century by Sutton and Hammond (1983, p. 200). Legg dates it to the eighth century (1901, p. xviii). On earlier Teutonic/Celtic roots see Schramm, 1937, pp. 1–11. There can be no certainty that Richard II's entry in 1377 was the first to use extensive ceremonial. Anne Lancashire notes that there are references to street pageantry throughout the thirteenth century, but they tend to refer rather generally to '*prodigialibus adinventionibus*' (1207) or '*prodigiosis ingeniis et portentis*' (1236) (2002, pp. 43–4).
3. An emphasis on either change or continuity in the coronation ceremony can arise out of strongly vested interests in the writer, as David J. Sturdy has shown (1990).
4. Albèri, 1839–63, quoted in Bertelli, 2001, pp. 17–18. Albèri attributes this *relazione* to the reign of Queen Mary, but the reference to 'the King' rather than 'the Queen' makes this unlikely to be correct.
5. Arthur Taylor, cited in Legg, 1901, p. xxiii. See also Schramm, 1937, p. 3. B. Wilkinson (1953, p. 18) states that the Elevation emerged with the coronation of Edward II or Edward III, but Schramm emphasizes parallels with earlier ceremonies (1937, pp. 1–11). The summary that follows is mainly based on the documents collected and reprinted in Legg, 1901, and Sutton and Hammond, 1983, and on the editorial and introductory matter in these collections. Fuller accounts of the sequence of events can be found in Legg's

Introduction and Sutton and Hammond's Chronology of Events as well as in Schramm, 1937. There were three basic variations in the possible format: either a King or a Queen might be crowned as sovereign, or, occasionally, a King and Queen Consort might be crowned together. For the most part I shall refer here to the crowned sovereign as King, with occasional reference to the possible extra presence of a Queen Consort.

6. This is the term used in the 'Little Device'.
7. Sutton and Hammond differ from Legg on the question of the chairs. They identify the chair on top of the scaffold as King Edward's Chair; but tradition suggests that King Edward's Chair was the one at ground level before the altar in which the monarch was crowned and received the ornaments. Sometimes erroneously known as St Edward's Chair, this chair has no connection with St Edward the Confessor, who died in 1066, but was made by Edward I to enclose the Stone of Scone, brought down from Scotland in 1296. I am grateful to Christine Reynolds, Assistant Keeper of Muniments at Westminster Abbey, for clarifying these points.
8. Sutton and Hammond (1983, p. 6) note how few countries outside England practised anointing in the early medieval period, but also note the spread of the practice, citing Legg, 'The Sacring of the English Kings'.
9. This quotation is from the 'Little Device' for the coronation of Henry VII, printed in Legg, 1901, p. 229. Manuscript revisions show the substitution of one monarch's name for another in subsequent versions.
10. See for example the 'Little Device', as above, p. 231.
11. Hoak (2003) has examined the changing form of the oath following the Reformation. This was virtually the only element that changed in an otherwise very fixed traditional ceremony. Indeed ceremonial practice is notable for its conservatism in spite of religious Reform (see Loach, 1994, and Kisby, 2001).
12. The meaning of the anointing, including the precise status it conferred upon the King and the relation to the church it placed him in, was much discussed over the centuries. See Hunt, 2008, pp. 13–19.
13. The quotation is from Robert Grosseteste, writing to Henry III. Charlemagne and Grosseteste are quoted from Hunt, 2008, pp. 14, 15.
14. Though the monarch was not at any point actually naked, the wording of some manuscripts on this point shows the degree to which this level of clothing was understood as a kind of nakedness. The description of the coronation of Richard III and his Queen in BL Additional Ms 6113, for example, says that they 'departed from their robes and stode naked from the medle upwarde' (quoted in Sutton and Hammond, 1983, p. 256). Sutton and Hammond compare this wording with the use of the term 'bare-footed' to mean lightly shod.
15. Adam of Usk wrote that Henry IV's 'festering death was foreshadowed at his coronation, for as a result of his anointing then, his head was so infected with lice that his hair fell out' (*Chronicle of Adam Usk,* 1997, p. 243).
16. Legg outlines the difference between fealty (owed by the lords spiritual) and homage (by the lords temporal) and prints the different oaths affirming each (1901, p. lvi). Fealty was sworn standing and homage kneeling.
17. 1308 was the date of the coronation of Edward II and Isabella and the date of the fourth recension of the *ordo*, which took several forms. Sometimes 1375–7

is cited as the starting point of this continuity to 1685, in which case the reference is to the *Liber Regalis*, the fourth and final form of the fourth recension. As Sturdy has shown, early historians of the 1308 oath were divided as to whether it demonstrated change or continuity (1990, pp. 237–8).

18. Quoted in McCoy, 1990, p. 218. See Hoak, 2003, pp. 146–50 and Hunt, 2008, pp. 78–95 for further detail on changes to the oath and ceremony. Hunt argues that the changes to Edward's coronation were 'far more complex than is often claimed' and were 'concerned with how the ceremony is interpreted rather than with its form and choreography' (p. 94).
19. The quotation about Elizabeth I's response is from Nicholas Sanders, *The Rise and Growth of the Anglican Schism* (1585), quoted in McCoy, 1990, p. 222. McCoy also makes the point about Mary sending for new oil. Elizabeth also seems to have made a dramatic gesture of some kind at the point of the mass, differently described by different witnesses, but possibly designed to enact her hostility to transubstantiation (see Sturdy, 1990, p. 240 for further detail; and on the unclarity surrounding Elizabeth's response, see Hunt, 2008, pp. 151–2).
20. Stubbs had his hand cut off for publishing his views in 1579 on whether Elizabeth should marry the Duke of Anjou (he argued that she should not, since she was too old to have children). Peter Wentworth was imprisoned in the Tower in 1576 (though eventually released) for speaking too openly about the Queen's restriction of free speech in Parliament.

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7
Elizabeth's Presence in the Jacobean Masque

Effie Botonaki

Masques were for centuries looked down upon as little more than beautifying portrayals of the monarchs they were written for. The critical work of the last few decades, however, has revealed the richness of these texts, and argued that they are in fact valuable sources for both literary critics and historians.[1] This essay focuses on Jacobean court masques and examines Queen Elizabeth's image in them, in an effort to explore the new King's attitude towards the late Queen's memory and precedent.

The formal aim of all the Jacobean court masques was the praise of James, which also entailed the praise of absolute monarchy. In this respect, the absence of direct references to Queen Elizabeth, who had been an extremely successful, recently departed ruler, is noteworthy. This absence becomes even more striking if we consider that these spectacles were addressed to a successor who had struggled for years and against all odds to build a close relationship with Elizabeth in his effort to gain the English throne, as highlighted in the correspondence between Elizabeth and James (Allinson, 2007). As I am about to argue, however, a closer study of these spectacles reveals that the late Queen is almost always there – sometimes even by being conspicuously absent – and this speaks volumes about her successor's feelings and, especially, his anxieties. At the end of my essay, I will also refer briefly to the different function of Elizabeth's image in the Caroline masques, as this difference sheds light on the role of Elizabeth's masked presence in the Jacobean masques, and the function of her memory in James's court.

When James succeeded Elizabeth to the throne of England, he had to compete with the memory of a very successful predecessor. His being a Scot and the son of an unpopular executed Queen did not make

things any easier for him. On the other hand, James's enthronement put an end to a long period of uncertainty over the fate of the English kingdom, and ensured that England would remain a Protestant country (Watkins, 2002, pp. 14–35). Until a few decades ago, historians would generally offer rather unflattering portrayals of James, laying emphasis on his financial recklessness, his vulnerability to his favourites and his uncouth manners (McElwee, 1974); more recent accounts, however, have repaired James's image, focusing rather on his learning, his support of the theatre, and his successful efforts to bring and maintain peace in his new kingdom (Lee, 1990; Lockyer, 1998; Croft, 2003). In the case of Elizabeth, things are quite different as her representation from the seventeenth century to this day has been mostly positive (Doran and Freeman, 2003; Dobson and Watson, 2002). This 'good Queen/bad King dichotomy' (Woolf, 1985, p. 191) seems to be largely a result of historiographic accounts produced towards the end of the Jacobean reign. William Camden's almost hagiographic representation of Elizabeth in his *Annales* (1625), for example, has been very influential, dominating most twentieth-century evaluations of the Elizabethan reign. Camden's account, like most mid-seventeenth-century portrayals of James and Elizabeth, illustrates how closely interwoven these portrayals were. As Christopher Haigh has argued, the 'virtues and successes of Elizabeth' in Camden's *Annales* were actually 'defined by the flaws and omissions of James'; in this respect, Haigh concludes, 'Camden wrote a commentary on the rule of James in the guise of a history of the rule of Elizabeth' (1984, p. 9). Historians have convincingly argued that James actively interfered whenever attempts to produce accounts of Elizabeth's life and reign were in progress (King, 1990, pp. 69–70; Barton, 1981, p. 714; Woolf, 1985, p. 180; Dobson and Watson, 2002, pp. 46–8.). This interference inevitably constituted an attempt on his part to control his predecessor's memory, and this, in turn, suggests that he was apprehensive of Elizabeth's posthumous power over his *own* image.

James tried, on the one hand, to handle Elizabeth's memory with the proper respect and, on the other, to undercut it; this contradictory effort is illustrated, among other things, in the arrangements he made for her funeral and burial: while he spent £17,000 to give his predecessor a grand funeral, he himself was absent from it, and this did not pass unnoticed; the Venetian secretary Giovanni Scaramelli, commenting on the King's absence, reported: 'they say he wishes to see her neither alive nor dead [...] Elizabeth's portrait is being hidden everywhere, and Mary Stuart's shown instead' (quoted in Perry, 1997, p. 155). In the case of

the late Queen's burial place within Westminster Abbey, James once more showed little respect as he moved Elizabeth's remains to another, less central, location and kept that space for himself. Unfortunately for James, as Dobson and Watson have remarked, Elizabeth, 'however carefully reburied, just wouldn't lie down' (2002, p. 47). As will be shown, the above is also true of Elizabeth's re-appearance in the Jacobean court masques.

When Elizabeth appears in the Jacobean masques, she usually takes the form of Diana, the goddess of the Moon, hunting, chastity and virginity – a representation in agreement with the conventional portrayal of the Queen in the last two decades of her reign (King, 1990, p. 43; Strong, 1987, pp. 125–6). What is noteworthy is that when Diana or the Moon appear or are referred to, there is rarely any direct association between these symbols and the dead Queen. This was particularly helpful as, in most cases, Diana or the Moon are either described in derogatory terms or are initially praised, but only to be eventually forced to withdraw, admit defeat or pay their respects to the Sun/God James. As Jean MacIntyre has pointed out, Elizabeth's virginity 'ran so counter to Jacobean emphasis on the marriage of courtiers and countries that its power had to be downgraded' (1998, p. 81).

In the first masque of the Jacobean reign, Samuel Daniel's *The Vision of the Twelve Goddesses* (1604), Diana makes a brief appearance as one of the goddesses, representing chastity and hunting. 'Chaste Diana' was dressed in 'Robes of greene', embroidered with silver half Moons, and carried 'weapons of the Wood', a bow and a quiver (p. B4). And although Diana's green cloak could, on a surface level, be associated with the colours of the forest, the audience would have easily linked it with one of the diseases thought to be caused by virginity, the so-called 'green-sickness'. The Moon as the goddess of chastity appears in a number of other masques too, but it is often treated with disrespect. In Jonson's *Oberon* (1611), for instance, the first scene opens with the appearance of the Moon and 'her light' (p. 359). However, in the anti-masque the satyrs are encouraged to 'go frisk about, and dance; / Or else *rail upon the Moon*' (p. 362, emphasis added). In a later song the satyrs do rail at the Moon, making fun of her virginal qualities: they refer to the 'paleness' and 'sickness' of Lady Moon's face, and finally advise her to 'be wise, and free to use / Pleasures, that you now do lose' (p. 362).

In Thomas Campion's *Lord Hay's Masque* (1607), Cynthia-Diana holds a key role. This masque was written to celebrate the marriage between a Scottish favourite, James, Lord Hay, and an English bride, Honora Denny, daughter to Sir Edward Denny – a marriage encouraged by

the King and resisted by the bride's family. At the beginning of the spectacle, the followers of Apollo (who stands for James) steal away Diana's nymphs, and the goddess in her anger turns the offenders into trees to punish them. The young men are described as 'thieves' (p. 26, l.297), and this has been interpreted as an allusion to the Scots who had followed James to England and who were generously rewarded by the King in a number of ways.[2] Several of them also managed to marry English heiresses, often with the King's own intervention and pressure upon the brides' families. The English aristocracy did not welcome such marriages, seeing these young Scots as greedy opportunists who were stealing away not only the country's wealth, but also its wealthiest brides. At the end of the performance, Apollo intervenes and pacifies Cynthia, who then transforms the trees into men again. James thus appears as a defender of marriage, a saviour, and a King who can unite enemy countries. Ironically enough, as Jean MacIntyre has pointed out, the marriage celebrated in *Lord Hay's Masque* did not have a happy ending as the bride died after a miscarriage; furthermore, MacIntyre adds, 'the union of the kingdoms also miscarried' within months after the performance of this masque (1998, p. 90). In this respect then, Apollo's victory over Cynthia proved to be only temporary. Commenting on the presence of Cynthia in *Lord Hay's Masque*, Marie Loughlin has suggested that it may have also had a didactic function; according to Loughlin, 'the choice of the goddess Cynthia as one of the masque's central figures and the subsequent emphasis on Elizabeth's virtues of chastity and temperance may indeed constitute a veiled exhortation to James to embrace such virtues' (1996, p. 843). In such a case, Cynthia's presence becomes a disconcerting reminder of James's faults and failures, encouraging the audience to see the new King as an unworthy successor of Elizabeth.

Although the antithesis between marriage and virginity is to be expected in spectacles complimenting a married king or an aristocratic wedding, in the case of Jacobean masques it acquires a more complex meaning. As suggested above, the Jacobean nuptial masques build a contrast between the married, fertile James, and his single, infertile predecessor. These spectacles often present virgins as weak and miserable: their single life is associated with solitude, and their chastity with barrenness. Given the temporal proximity of many of these masques to the Elizabethan reign, we can assume that the aforementioned drawbacks of virginity did remind the audience of the late Queen's case, and the dangers her kingdom could have encountered due to her inability to produce an heir. At the same time, the wedding masques

present James as a male Juno, a protector of marriage and procreation. In this respect, these masques, though indirectly, portray Elizabeth as James's negative Other, something that was quite convenient for the new King.

One of the earliest nuptial masques, Jonson's *Barriers at a Marriage* (1606), was written to celebrate the marriage of Frances Howard and Robert Devereux, which would hopefully reconcile the Essex and Howard families. The masque begins with a dialogue between Truth and Opinion (who is disguised as Truth) about marriage and virginity. Truth advocates marriage while Opinion recommends single life. According to Truth, virgins are 'unprofitable' (p. 11, l.67) since 'from mere one nothing springs' (p. 11, l.65); on the other hand, marriage is ordained by God: 'The golden tree of marriage began / In paradise, and bore the fruit of man / On whose sweet branches angels sat and sung' (p. 11, ll.68–70). In support of her position, Opinion refers to the difficulties wives encounter, such as the pains of childbirth, the dullness of their life, and, especially, their subjection to their husbands. She then goes on to praise the freedom of virgins, using arguments that remind us vividly of Elizabeth's case:

> virgins in their sweet and peaceful state
> Have all things perfect, spin their own free fate,
> Depend on no proud second, are their own
> Centre and circle, now and always one.
>
> (p. 13, ll.130–3)

The above positive view of virginity justifies Elizabeth's choice to remain single and thus able to 'spin' her 'own free fate'; it also highlights some of the qualities that made her a successful Queen, and her country a powerful kingdom.

This flattering representation of virginity, however, could not remain unchallenged. Thus, Truth re-attacks virgins as 'strange and stubborn thing[s]' (p. 13, l.146), and invites them to 'yield' 'to sweet Hymen' (p. 14, l.177), warning them that, if they do not, they will be childless, sexually deprived, weak, lonely and a burden to their families:

> For as a lone vine in a naked field
> Never extols her branches, never bears
> Ripe grapes, but with a headlong heaviness wears
> Her tender body, and her highest sprout

> Is quickly levelled with her fading root,
> By whom no husbandsmen, no youths will dwell [. . .]
> So whilst a virgin doth, untouched, abide
> All unmanured, she grows old with her pride;
> But when to equal wedlock, in fit time,
> Her fortune and endeavour lets her climb,
> Dear to her love and parents she is held.
>
> (p. 14, ll.163–8, 172–6)

In the above lines too the virgins' representation could bring memories of the late Queen; in this case, though, the portrait is grim, encouraging the audience to picture Elizabeth in her final years as an aging, lonely, forsaken Queen[3] who had been justly punished for her 'pride' – her decision not to 'endeavour' to find a husband and produce the long desired male heir. In those years, English people could indeed no longer view Elizabeth as a mighty Queen who could protect them from all enemies; they probably had more reasons to see her as a powerless old woman who had eventually brought them to a very insecure and dangerous position; such a Queen could not be 'held' 'Dear' anymore, but would rather provoke her subjects' censure and pity.

Barriers at a Marriage, like all wedding masques, ends with the triumph of marriage over virginity; in the closing scene Opinion's disguise as Truth is removed and the real Truth pays her respects to the King – the patron of the performance and champion of married life – addressing him as a 'royal judge' (p. 17, l.276) whose 'rule and judgement is divine' (p. 17, l.280). The representation of the King as a protector of marriage in nuptial masques, however, was in sharp contrast with James's matrimonial unhappiness: as early as 1606 he and his wife were so estranged that they kept separate households, an arrangement unchanged until Anne's death in 1619.

James's failure in matters of marriage was not restricted to his role as a husband but was extended to his role as a matchmaker. Ironically enough, the marriage between Frances Howard and Robert Devereux the *Barriers at a Marriage* and *Hymenaei* celebrated with such pomp ended in annulment a few years later (1613), the official grounds for the divorce being non-consummation of the marriage. The real reason, however, was the affair between Frances Howard and James's favourite, Robert Carr; thus, soon after her divorce, Howard and Carr were married, and their union was celebrated with yet another court masque by

Jonson, *A Challenge at Tilt* (1613–14; see Lindley, 1986). To make matters still worse, this marriage too ended in scandal as only two years later the couple were convicted of poisoning Sir Thomas Overbury. In this case, the King's conciliatory attempts eventually met with dramatic failure, not just because both the unions he sanctioned proved unhappy, but because the scandals they led to (especially the one related to Overbury's murder) further blemished James's already tainted public image. In those years more and more of his subjects began to look back to the Elizabethan times with growing nostalgia. As Bishop Goodman eloquently put it, although towards the end of Elizabeth's reign 'the people were very generally weary of an old woman's government', 'after a few years, when we had experience of the Scottish government [...] the Queen did seem to revive; then was her memory much magnified' (quoted in Ashton, 1969, p. 77).

In an obvious effort to glorify James and gloss over his weaknesses, Jacobean masques presented him as a Sun/God throughout his reign. In *Oberon*, for instance, James 'holds his course, as certain as the Sun', and brings life to everything he shines on: 'He makes it ever Day, and ever Spring, / Where he doth shine, and quickens every thing / Like a new Nature' (p. 362).[4] James's representation as a Sun was very useful as it worked on at least two levels: on a surface level, it portrayed him as an omnipotent, life-giving monarch; on an underlying level, it reinforced the contrast between himself as the Sun and Elizabeth as the Moon, which was in his favour. In Jonson's *News From the New World Discovered in the Moon* (1621) the contrast between the Moon and James is indirect but telling: the Moon is described as a cold region, and the creatures who live there, awed by King James's rays, wish to abandon it and come to earth, which they eventually do. In several other masques, whenever the Moon appears, the Sun/James always follows and makes the Moon retire: as Campion's *Lord Hay's Masque* puts it, 'Night must needs yield when Phoebus gets the day' (p. 27, l.337). Likewise, in a song from Jonson's *Masque of Beauty* (1608), Night is encouraged to 'Yeeld [...] to the light' (p. D4v). At the end of Jonson's *Masque of Blackness* (1605), with the appearance of the Sun, 'Dian, with her burning face, / Declines apace' (p. 9, ll.322–3). *Oberon*, too, ends with the retreat of the moon and the advent of day: 'The *Moon* is pale, and spent; and winged Night / Makes head-long haste, to fly the Morning's sight' (p. 363). The final lines of the masque, however, present the Sun as jealous, insecure and anxious to reclaim his position:

> What haste the jealous *Sun* doth make,
> His fiery Horses up to take,
> And once more shew his head!
> Lest, taken with the brightness of this Night,
> The World should wish it last, and never miss his light.
>
> (p. 363)

Since *Oberon* was a masque written for and performed by Prince Henry, this different portrayal of the Sun could be seen as an allusion to James's anxiety about the comparisons made not only between him and Elizabeth but also between him and his own successor; if we consider that Henry was seen by many as Elizabeth's true successor, the Sun's (James's) haste to outshine the Moon becomes even more revealing.

The only Jacobean masque that tried to link James to his predecessor without making any negative comments about her was Jonson's *The Golden Age Restored* (1616). This masque was performed while the trials of Robert Carr and Frances Howard for the murder of Thomas Overbury were in process, and it sought to celebrate James's supposed purging of the corruption of his court. Astraea, invited by Pallas, appears in this masque as the long-absent goddess of justice who descends in a transformed world, escorted by 'the Golden Age'. She and Pallas discuss whether Jove-James should restore justice, as the temporary rule of the Iron Age is blamed on the 'offending mortals' (p. 102, l.2) 'Below' (p. 104, l.96), and not on his own ineffective rule. Astraea finally decides to stay, marvelling at the miraculous changes the magnanimous Jove has eventually brought about:

> What change is here! [. . .]
> Of all there seems a second birth,
> It is become a heaven on earth,
> And Jove is present here,
> I feel the godhead; nor will doubt
> But he can fill the place throughout
> Whose power is everywhere.
>
> (p. 205, ll.184, 190–5)

In this masque the two monarchs are brought together as allies, sharing not only the same concerns for their people, but also the same views

on the position and rights of kings. On the other hand, the underlying meaning is that the Elizabethan golden age was followed by a reign that led the kingdom to decay. And although the praise of James at the end of the masque by all the masquers, and especially Astraea, seeks to repair his image, it does not completely erase his initial failure.

James was not the only one who was concerned about the inevitable comparisons his English subjects were making between him and his predecessor; Queen Anne seems to have been anxious too about this issue, and this is evident in the masques written for and performed by her. It should be noted that Anne was not just the key masquer in several of these performances, but also responsible for their central ideas, and the way their main figures were represented.

The staging of the first masque written for Queen Anne, *The Vision of Twelve Goddesses*, gives us a hint about Anne's attitude towards the late Queen and her memory. Wishing her fellow masquers to wear impressive costumes, but lacking the time or money needed for their making, the new Queen gave permission to Lady Suffolk and Lady Walshingham to 'take of the late Queenes best apparel out of the Tower' whichever of Elizabeth's gowns they found suitable for the performance (Stuart, 1994, p. 197). The reuse of aristocratic clothes as costumes in private and public theatres was not uncommon in early modern England; furthermore, Elizabeth had on some occasions remodelled her dresses in order to give them as gifts to her ladies-in-waiting (McManus, 2002, p. 107). In the case of Anne's masque, however, the clothes of the old Queen regnant changed shape and owner not only without her permission but at the behest of the young Queen consort who had only recently taken her place. In this respect, the reduction of the revered late Queen's formal gowns into theatrical costumes inevitably constituted an act of disrespect, if not sacrilege.

Another masque Queen Anne was involved in which shows, albeit indirectly, disrespect towards Elizabeth is Jonson's *The Masque of Queens* (1609). This masque presents twelve queens famous for their chastity, courage and successful rule. The queens come from various countries and historical periods, and only one belongs to the history of England; this, however, is not Elizabeth, as one might expect, but 'Boodicea'. Anne, who is the key-masquer, appears last, and she is described as 'A Queen, in whom all' the previous 'do live' (p. 52, l.676). Since Anne was the instigator of this masque, she was most probably at least *partly* responsible for the disappearance of the late Queen. The fact that this masque was performed in front of an audience that included a large number of Elizabeth's own favourites makes Elizabeth's exclusion

even more conspicuous and revealing. It could thus be argued that the blatant omission of Elizabeth from *The Masque of Queens* shows that, as late as six years after her death, the revival of her memory was still disconcerting for her successors.[5]

The authors who wished to praise Anne seemed anxious too about her differences from Elizabeth so they tried to highlight those qualities of Anne that Elizabeth lacked. The most obvious difference, of course, was that Anne was a wife and a mother. Samuel Daniel, in the dedicatory epistle to Anne in his tragicomedy *Hymens Triumph* (1615), presents her as a Queen who deserves to be loved by her people more than any Queen of the past, not only because of her 'good graces', but also for 'having been / The meanes our State stands fast established / And blest by your blest wombe' (p. 2v). Three years later, Daniel repeats these arguments in his *Collection of the historie of England* (1618); in the dedicatory epistle to Anne, queens are described as 'the Mothers of our Kings, by whom is continued the blessing of succession that preserves the kingdome' and as 'interested in the Histories' of their kingdoms 'which containe their memories'. In the above lines the value of queens is once more restricted to their reproductive role. Anne's fertile body guarantees 'the blessing of succession that preserves the kingdome' and, as Daniel puts it, this is the reason History would 'containe' Anne's memory. In his effort to glorify and please his female patron, however, Daniel struck a blow not only against the former Queen (by implying that she had failed to 'preserve' her 'kingdome' through procreation), but against Anne too: though unwittingly, his dedication encouraged the reader to think of a Queen, who, in contrast with Anne, was not included in history merely as the mother of a king, but as one who had actually shaped it – and this would be no other than the childless Elizabeth.

James and Anne's sons, unlike their parents, did not seem to feel uncomfortable about the memory of the late Queen. This was particularly true of Prince Henry; in fact, as several critics have argued, Henry consciously tried to associate himself with Elizabeth, and his wish to revive chivalry in the English court is seen in this context (Strong, 1986, pp. 141–60; Perry, 1997, pp. 166–72; McElwee, 1974, pp. 170–2; Norbrook, 1984, p. 98). The masques written for the young Prince illustrate vividly this connection between the young Prince and his godmother (Strong, 1987, pp. 187–90; Butler, 1998, pp. 30–3). In Daniel's *Tethys' Festival* (1610), for example, Tethys gives Henry Astraea's sword in a symbolic gesture that presents the Prince as Elizabeth's successor. The first masque written for Henry, Jonson's *Prince Henry's Barriers* (1610), 'revived the spirit of the Elizabethan Accession

Day tilts', illustrating the Prince's admiration for the Elizabethan past (Norbrook, 1986, p. 91). This masque, discussed also by Trevisan in the present volume, includes not one but three direct references to Elizabeth. In a review of England's glorious kings, there is a eulogy of 'great Eliza', 'whose Fame no Tongue can boast / Up to her worth, though all best Tongues be glad / To name her still' (p. 357). Elizabeth's praise here concerns mainly her success in strengthening the country's naval power. Later on, there is extensive reference to the defeat of the Spanish Armada, which is portrayed as God's providence towards Eliza, 'That dear-belov'd of Heaven, whom to preserve / The winds were call'd to fight, and storms to serve' (p. 357). The third time the late Queen is mentioned, however, is in relation to her successor, who is unsurprisingly presented as a better monarch. James has not only 'restor'd' the 'Decay'd' 'wall of Shipping by *Eliza* made', but he has put it to a more 'noble' and peaceful 'use' – trade. Right after this argument, Prince Henry, who was himself keenly interested in naval matters, is urged to aspire to imitate no one else but his own father:

> *Royal* and *mighty James,* whose name shall set
> A goal for all posterity to sweat,
> In running at by actions hard and high:
> This is the height at which your thoughts must fly.
>
> (p. 358)

The urge to the young Prince to follow the example of his pacifist father rather than that of his more aggressive godmother is a subtle comment on the rising contrast between the King and his son. James himself seemed to have disapproved of his son's temperament: when in 1611 he learnt that Henry was planning to appear in a masque on horseback, he prohibited it. The Prince, from an early age, had distinguished himself as a pious, dignified and serious young man, a patron of scientists and an heir who would not hesitate to disagree with his father when his conscience urged him to do so. He was also openly critical of the excesses of his father's court as well as of favourites like Carr (McElwee, 1974, p. 180; Butler, 2009, pp. 173–8). These qualities, especially his differences from his father, made him very popular and led to exaggerated laments when he died from typhoid fever at the age of 18. Contemporary accounts claim that James was not only displeased with his son's digression from his own model but that he was even jealous of his increasing popularity (Ashton, 1969, pp. 96–100; Butler, 1998, p. 31). As we have seen, the

divide between James and Henry that *Prince Henry's Barriers* hints at is linked to the divide between James and Elizabeth. And, although the masque tries to take James' side, by suggesting that Henry and Elizabeth shared the same qualities and ideas, it inevitably makes James appear as the odd one out.

Charles and Henrietta Maria, like Prince Henry, did not seem to feel uneasy about Elizabeth's precedent. This, of course, could well have to do with the fact that they were not her immediate successors so they were not in *direct* competition with her memory. On the other hand, 'Elizabethanism' was particularly vivid towards the end of the Jacobean and the beginning of the Caroline reign, so Charles and his consort did have reasons to be insecure too.[6] This complex situation probably explains why a number of Caroline masques seem to be arguing that the new King and Queen have qualities similar to those of Elizabeth.

In contrast with Anne, Henrietta Maria was a happily married Queen whose husband actively encouraged her glorification in court masques. The Caroline masques celebrate the virtues of the King and Queen within the same spectacle (and not in different ones as was generally the case with the Jacobean masques), and give the King and his consort equal praise. Henrietta Maria is thus, like Charles, attributed divine status: she is a 'bright Deity' (Carew, *Coelum Britannicum*, l.965) with 'Divine Beauty' (Townshend, *Tempe Restored*, l.323); she looks upon the earth from above and with the 'beams' of her soul 'she doth survey' the people's 'growth in virtue or decay, Still lighting' them 'in Honour's way!' (Davenant, *Salmacida Spolia*, ll.379–81). Masques portray Henrietta as a beautiful and virtuous Queen who loves and is loved back by her subjects. In this respect, as Martin Butler has argued in his discussion of the 'platonic' court drama of the 1630s, Henrietta appears to be deriving her authority 'not from her public position as Charles's queen but from her personal sway in the hearts of men, a sovereignty firmer [...] than any conferred by birth or place' (1984, p. 29). Furthermore, in presenting Henrietta as a tender and caring Queen who instructs and protects her people, masques attribute maternal qualities to her. The portrayal of Henrietta as a maternal but at the same time romantic female figure is strongly reminiscent of Elizabeth; and, as with Elizabeth, this dual portrayal of Henrietta as an affectionate mother and virtuous beloved functioned as an innocent-looking cover for female assertion and royal absolutism.

In Aurelian Townshend's *Albion's Triumph* (1632) the Queen appears as Alba, representing whiteness/purity. In this masque we also find Diana standing for purity and love, and co-operating with Cupid – her former

enemy in Jacobean masques; now they both have the same aim: to make King Albanactus fall in love with Alba. Albanactus, whose role is performed by Charles, is finally 'subdued to Love and Chastity, by CUPID and DIANA' (p. 2). A song Diana sings with Cupid draws attention to her similarities to Alba:

> As pure, and Cleere, as ALBAS skin,
> As her faire Fame, or thoughts within:
> Pure as my selfe; nay pure like Thee,
> Now Love is that which Love should be.
>
> (p. 14)

In presenting chastity as a characteristic shared by both Alba and Diana, *Albion's Triumph* links Henrietta to Elizabeth: Elizabeth was a chaste virgin, Henrietta is a chaste wife. In this masque there is clearly emphasis on the similarities between Charles's consort and Elizabeth. Henrietta, like Anne, is a wife and a mother; but, whereas Anne seemed to underline the contrast between her own married state and the single state of her predecessor, Henrietta bypasses this difference, and in a sense presents herself as Elizabeth's successor. Now, the contrast is not between marriage and virginity but between chaste and unchaste love.

Charles and Henrietta's marital concord is a prominent theme in many Caroline masques and has a complex political meaning. The masques written for and performed by Charles and his consort present their marriage as a Neoplatonic union of love, virtue and beauty, and in extolling their marital bliss argue that the latter has embraced and transformed the whole kingdom (Lindley, 2004, p. 385; Orgel and Strong, 1973, pp. 52–8; Britland, 2006; Veevers, 1989). William Davenant's *Luminalia or The Festivall of Light* (1638), for instance, performed by the Queen and her ladies, celebrates the 'conjugall' 'vertue' (p. 20) of the royal couple, who have made 'this happy Island a patterne to all Nations, as Greece was amongst the Ancients' (p. 2). In Jonson's *Loves Triumph Through Callipolis* (1630), performed by Charles and his Lords, the emphasis is again on the King and Queen's chaste love. It begins with an antimasque of 'deprav'd Lovers' with 'confus'd affections', who are ruled by immoderate passions; the antimasquers are corrupt, jealous, lustful, proud, and are described as a 'sensuall schoole of lust', 'the weake diseased race / of those [who] were tortur'd on the wheele of love', 'slaves to sense: / Meere cattell, and not men' (p. 5). The key-masquer, Euphemus (whose role is played by Charles) and his men

are characterized by the opposite qualities; they are lovers too, but they are wise, witty, modest, valiant, elegant, magnificent. If we try to find similarities between these two groups and past English monarchs, the equivalence is obvious: the lustful, dissolute antimasquers remind us of James and his favourites, whereas the honourable main masquers display all the qualities that were conventionally attributed to Elizabeth. From this point of view, this masque builds a contrast between Charles and his father, and a bridge between Charles and Elizabeth.

The way in which James's sons handled Elizabeth's cult intensifies the impression that James himself must have felt uneasy about it. The relevant masques show that both Henry and Charles were comfortable enough with Elizabeth's myth to encourage their identification with her, but without attempting to appear better. Their father, on the other hand, did not only aspire to become as charismatic and wise a ruler as Elizabeth had been, but obviously wished to surpass her in fame. At the same time, he was wise enough to refrain from undermining openly the late Queen's memory, since such an approach would show him to be an ungrateful and insecure successor, and this would not fit well with the image of the temperate and omnipotent monarch he strove to cultivate. The masques written for James reproduce this approach and undermine Elizabeth in subtle ways: they neglect to mention her even when such references would be most fitting, they attack the virtues and qualities she was associated with, or they give her an inappropriately minor role. Although there is no evidence that James dictated to playwrights the themes of the masques they produced, or that he sought to control their meaning, we can assume that the masque authors, eager to please their King and patron, would incorporate his anxieties into their works in order to deflate and deconstruct them. From this point of view, the masques' overt and intended comparisons between James and Elizabeth (that always show him to be a better monarch than her) bespeak his concern about the actual comparisons his subjects were making; as for the masques' covert or unwitting references to Elizabeth, these illustrate how difficult it must have been for both James and the English people to forget her.

As this essay has argued, none of the various forms of elimination, containment and appropriation of Elizabeth's myth we encounter in Jacobean masques could ultimately undermine it. This inability of the masques to hide, marginalize or disempower James's predecessor runs parallel to his inability to free himself from the bonds of the Elizabethan past. As Montrose has acutely observed, James's effort to 'absorb the late queen's charisma while circumscribing her place in the cultural

memory' was 'singularly unsuccessful', and 'the measure of its failure is our enduring attraction to the subject of Elizabeth' (2006, p. 252). The masques written for the eyes of James and his court reveal the wide range of feelings that the new King must have experienced, and reproduce the various strategies he used to appropriate his differences from his predecessor. In doing so, the Jacobean masques participated in the continuous negotiations between James's presence and Elizabeth's absence, and reveal how complex the relationship of the two monarchs inevitably was, not only when James was struggling to become her heir, but even after he had succeeded her as a glorious Sun who could outshine her with his divine rays.

Notes

1. Masques began to attract attention especially after the appearance of Stephen Orgel's seminal work, *The Jonsonian Masque*, 1965. More recent studies include Limon, 1990; Lindley, 1984; Bevington and Holbrook, 1998; McManus, 2002; Butler, 2009; Ravelhofer, 2009.
2. On this issue, see also Stephen Orgel's essay in the present volume.
3. Bishop Goodman paints a very similar picture of Elizabeth; according to Goodman, at the end of her days, Elizabeth's 'melancholy' was so intense that she would 'break out into such words as these: "They have yoked my neck, – I can do nothing, – I have not one man in whom I can repose trust: I am a miserable forlorn woman"' (quoted in Ashton, 1969, p. 77).
4. For similar representations of James, see also Coperario, *The Masque of Flowers*, p. C2v; and Jonson, *The Irish Masque*, p. 374.
5. In his study of Anne's attitude towards the Elizabethan past, James Knowles has offered a somewhat different view, arguing that Anne 'drew upon her predecessor's imagery' to 'assert' her status and 'fashion' 'a distinct, gendered space,' 'differentiating [thus] herself from her husband' (2003, pp. 21, 23). Sara Trevisan makes a similar case in the present volume.
6. In his study of Elizabethan nostalgia in the decades following James's death, however, John Watkins argues that this nostalgia was not as widespread as scholars have claimed and that 'it was not the only available response to the experience of historical change' (2000, p. 96).

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8

Lady of the Lake or Queen of the Ocean? The Representation of Female Power in *Prince Henry's Barriers* and *Tethys' Festival*

Sara Trevisan

Anne of Denmark, as a foreign, married mother, could hardly have made a starker contrast to her Virgin predecessor. The new Queen was not an absolute, unmarried female monarch 'normalized' by numerous layers of symbolism (Hackett, 1995, p. 239); instead, she represented the 'normality' of a royal family with male heirs. The Court's attention inevitably switched from the Queen seen as sole monarch to a queen whose identity revolved around her being married to the King of England, of whose children she was the mother. This came to influence contemporary court entertainments: the symbolism of Elizabeth as the virginal yet devoted spouse of the kingdom was no longer relevant (Nichols, 1964, I, p. 132); the royal family in its entirety, especially the children, was made to provide a 'magnificent spectacle', as well as the comforting idea of an 'orderly succession' (Bergeron, 1991, pp. 68, 91).

Instances of this new focus on the royal children are the two masques devised respectively by the King and the Queen on 6 January and 5 June 1610, for the appointment of Henry as Prince of Wales: *Prince Henry's Barriers* by Ben Jonson, and *Tethys' Festival* by Samuel Daniel. These entertainments display the degree of attention and celebration accorded by both parents to the male heir's official entry into the court. However, an inner tension can also be detected regarding an issue which had not been of topical concern in England for half a century: the limits of the female consort's field of action in private and public affairs. Jonson's and Daniel's masques reveal an underlying concern

with the education of the heir to the throne. Should the Queen and mother play an educational role or should the King alone decide on the heir's upbringing? This issue is presented in symbolical form in the two masques. In *Prince Henry's Barriers* we encounter a form of education based on male-centred principles. It attempts to celebrate the English monarchical pedigree, via King Arthur; James's predecessor, Elizabeth, is absorbed into this dynastic succession as if she were a man (King, 1990, p. 30). At the same time the only female character, the Lady of the Lake, performs a secondary role. Daniel's masque, instead clearly celebrates a more powerful female figure, the Queen of the Ocean, highlighting her role in the education of the heir and elaborating connections with Elizabeth via two of her most renowned symbolic *personae*: Astraea and Cynthia.

This essay argues, first of all, that the debate bodied forth in these two masques was rooted in the decade-long struggle between James and Anne concerning Henry's education. It continues by presenting a thematic analysis of the two masques in order to show their interdependence with regard to the different representations of female power.

1. James vs. Anne

On 21 February 1594, two days after Henry's birth, the Earl of Mar was appointed keeper of the royal heir. Henry was to be raised at Stirling Castle by Mar and his mother, just as James himself had been raised by the earl's father and grandfather (*CSPS*, IX, p. 280). James was thus trying to prevent two interrelated threats to his own and Henry's safety. He feared that the heir apparent might be seized and used against him by rival factions, as had happened to himself when he was sixteen (de Lisle, 2005, p. 56; Bergeron, 1991, p. 59). As he explained to the Earl of Mar in 1595:

> in the surety of my son consisteth my surety and I have concredited unto you the charge of his keeping upon the trust I have of your honesty, this I command you out of my own mouth, being in company of those I like, otherwise for any charge or necessity that can come from me, you shall not deliver him. And in case God call me at any time see that neither for the Queen nor Estates, their pleasure, you deliver him till he be eighteen years of age, and that he command you himself. (*Letters*, 1846, II, pp. 91–2)

Shortly after Henry's birth, James had officially stated his worry that the increasing strength of Scottish Catholic lords might lead them 'to carry away from Stirling the King and young Prince without great impediment' (*Calendar*, 1898–1969, IX, p. 386); the same concern was underlined again in 1600-01 (*Calendar*, 1898–1969, XIII, ii, p. 783). The Catholic threat was related to James's second concern, which Mar's custody of Henry could once again prevent: he wanted to ensure that Henry received a Protestant education, like his own. However, this implied that Henry would have to be taken and raised away from his mother (*Calendar*, 1900, X, p. 40; *Calendar*, 1898–1969, XI, p. 344), who had recently converted to Catholicism.

Anne could not accept this situation, a reaction which broke the quiet relationship she had been enjoying with James (Bergeron, 1991, p. 54). In 1595, she tried to have Henry taken away from Stirling, a plan which was discovered by the King (*Calendar*, 1898–1969, XII, p. 47). Anne became so furious that, it was said, she almost miscarried the child she was bearing (Barroll, 2001, p. 180). Members of the King's circle believed that the Queen's attempt to break Mar's custody had been fostered by enemies of the Crown (*Calendar*, 1898–1969, XI, p. 609; XII, p. 150), since she had surrounded herself with a group of supporters to increase her political weight *vis-à-vis* the King (*Calendar*, 1898–1969, XII, p. 47).

In 1603, after Elizabeth I's death, James left Scotland and headed for London with a group of lords including, among others, the Earl of Mar. Anne, who in the meantime had given birth to Charles and Elizabeth, seized the opportunity to attempt to take Henry away from Stirling. Her plan was again discovered: after learning about it, James immediately sent Mar back to Scotland to convince her to desist. Anne was greatly upset, and, it was reported, began to beat her belly so as to cause, as had nearly happened in 1595, the miscarriage of the child she was expecting (*Calendar*, 1900, X, p. 40). Anne stated her refusal to join James in England without Henry and that she would not countenance the continued guardianship of the Earl of Mar. James eventually surrendered. The Scottish Privy Council formally discharged Mar from his role as Henry's custodian (*Register*, 1877–98, VI, p. 571; *Calendar*, 1900, X, p. 40), and the Prince was consigned to Anne (*Register*, 1877–98, VI, p. 571; Barroll, 2001, p. 31). However, after his accession to the throne of England, James made sure such disruptions would not happen again, by refusing to bring to London the Scottish nobles who, he thought, had opposed his plans by helping the Queen (Barroll, 2001, p. 34).

Because of Anne's persistence, Prince Henry was delivered from Mar's tutelage at age nine, that is, nine years before the 'original plan' which

appears in James's above-mentioned letter. She had finally obtained the permission to educate her son, which she exercised at her own Court (Aaron, 2002, pp. 62, 65), until, aged sixteen, Henry was appointed Prince of Wales. Nevertheless, Mar had given Henry the religious education which James had desired for his son (Barroll, 2001, pp. 29–31, 72), who was beginning to be hailed, by the opponents of James's pacifist policy, as the new royal champion, ready to take up arms to support the Protestant cause. At the same time, the fact that Anne felt the need to have a masque staged, in addition to the King's, for the celebration of the new Prince of Wales, perhaps reveals the importance she attached to her role as a woman and mother in her son's education, and the special love she felt toward Henry. In fact, in 1616, when, after Henry's death, Charles was in turn appointed Prince of Wales, Anne was not even present at the ceremony (Barroll, 2001, p. 126).

2. *Prince Henry's Barriers*

Jonson's masque is styled according to one of Henry's favourite themes: chivalric romance (Minami, 1990, p. 64). It focuses on the knight Meliadus (a character Henry had already chosen for himself for a spectacle staged in 1609; Nichols, 1823, II, pp. 266–7) and his arrival at the Court of Britain as the successor of *Arthurus redivivus*, a reference to King James. The Scottish James justified his accession to the throne of England through two remote genealogical connections to the same Tudor (and, ultimately, British/Welsh) line of which Elizabeth had been the direct successor.[1] Because under his reign England (plus Wales) and Scotland would undergo a union which, unlike that of the Roses, would 'never be declin'd' (335–6, 338), James was often identified as the new King Arthur; even more so as he was connected with a unionist prophecy of Welsh origin foreseeing the restoration of the British monarchical line (Kendrick, 1970, pp. 5–7; Anglo, 1961, pp. 38–9), which he himself seems to have encouraged. As reported by John Harington, this prophecy claimed that a baby 'crowned in his cradle', with a lion-shaped spot like the one James purported to have (de Lisle, 2005, p. 50), would reunite Britain, as the rightful successor to King Arthur, perhaps even as Arthur himself returning from his long sleep in Avalon (Harington, 1880, p. 121). So, the masque's Arthurian framework was not only a homage to Henry's interests, but also a conscious political statement celebrating the new Jacobean Golden Age (Williams, 1977, p. 228) through a symbolic connection between James and the English dynasty.

In the masque, Arthur/James watches over Henry's chivalric education (Badenhausen, 1995, pp. 20–4; Graham, 2001, pp. 381–4). After being raised by the Lady of the Lake, Meliadus is ready to become a knight under the guidance of Merlin. Before that the Lady must deliver Merlin from the grave where she has imprisoned him. Merlin will then read Meliadus's fate written on a shield received by Arthur, and instruct him in the conduct befitting a good ruler, exemplified by the feats of past English sovereigns – including Elizabeth – and eventually epitomized by the rule of '*Royall*, and *mightie* Iames' (198–202, 345).

What is of interest for our purposes is the figure of the Lady of the Lake. As textual and contextual evidence suggests, she seems to refer to the role of Queen Anne in Henry's education. The Lady thus addresses Meliadus:

> Glory of knights, and hope of all the earth,
> Come forth; your fostress bids; who from your birth
> Hath bred you to this hour, and for this throne
>
> (147–9)

The Lady's educational efforts are intended to make the best of Meliadus in view of his investiture at Court. However, to turn her into his 'fostress', Jonson had to modify what is deemed his only source for, and the only extant version of, the masque's Arthurian plot: the Meliadus episode in the *Prophecies de Merlin*. This was a thirteenth-century work reprinted in the year of James's accession, combining chivalric episodes with political prophecies on the return of King Arthur to the throne of England (Brinkley, 1967, p. 8). In the *Prophecies*, the Scottish knight Meliadus is the *lover* of the Lady of the Lake, and is led by her to Merlin's tomb (Williams, 1977, p. 224).[2] Jonson was determined (most likely following Henry's suggestion) to maintain the name Meliadus, since its spelling variant 'Moeliades' was said to be an anagram of *miles a deo* or 'soldier of God', a reference to the Protestant Christian-soldier model cherished by the Prince (Williams, 1977, p. 223). However, Jonson conflated this story with another, more famous one, also in the *Prophecies*, and possibly derived from its namesake prose romance (*Prophecies*, 1926, II, 240ff.): that of Lancelot, foster child of the Lady of the Lake. Having been raised by the Lady, Lancelot is taken to Arthur's Court so that he can become a knight (Williams, 1977, p. 224). The union of Meliadus's progress with the educational role of the Lady of the Lake was most likely made for a specific purpose: the alteration of the Lady's

narrative function. A lover in a masque for Henry's appointment as Prince of Wales would certainly have been inconvenient and contrary to decorum; but also, as the only female educational figure in the masque, the Lady was perhaps devised as a reference to Queen Anne. The audience may have grasped the connection, which is, however, more than a simple reference. In the masque it is the King who has the last word on Prince Henry's education: James's knowledge of 'how to governe' constitutes 'the height at which [Henry's] thoughts must fly'. His educational importance is acknowledged also by the Lady, who encourages Meliadus to 'serve', 'give himself unto', and 'obay' only this 'wise Master' (360–2). The message seems to have been clear, at least to Anne, who would later reply with her own masque.

In the light of the vicissitudes regarding Henry's education, some lines uttered by the Lady of the Lake sound like references to Anne's ten-year-long struggle for the custody of the Prince. In her first speech, the Lady briefly summarizes her fictional background:

> Lest any yet should doubt, or might mistake
> What nymph I am; behold the ample lake
> Of which I am styled; and near it Merlin's tomb [. . .]
> By this it will not ask me to proclaim
> More of myself, whose actions, and whose name
> Were so full feigned in *British* Arthur's court,
> No more then it will fit me to report
> What hath before been trusted to our squire
> Of me, my knight, his fate, and my desire
> To meet, if not prevent, his destiny
> And stile him to the court of Britany.
>
> (6–17)

She makes it clear that she is a Lady of the Lake from the Arthurian cycles, lest the audience might 'mistake' her for another such nymph. In particular, she is the one who imprisons Merlin in a grave, not to be confused with the Lady who raises Lancelot and educates him in the symbolic meaning of knighthood (Harf-Lancner, 1984, pp. 304–5; Keen, 1984, p. 81), nor with the water nymph who gives Arthur his sword (Broughton, 1988, p. 142). Jonson's Lady states it is not necessary to repeat her story: it is supposedly well-known to the audience, and – this reference is not clear – had possibly been narrated before the masque itself by a 'squire', perhaps an introductory character intended

to provide the audience with the basic plot of the masque. So, in Jonson's masque there appear the Lady of the Lake who imprisoned Merlin, and the knight Meliadus, who was raised by the Lady to be sent to the court of Britain. However, the lexical parallels *his fate* / *my desire* (15–16) suggest a personalization and adaptation of the Lady's character by means of her questioning of the knight's fate. By wishing to 'meet, if not prevent' Meliadus's destiny, the Lady of the Lake here displays an ambiguous attitude: she wishes to second ('meet') her knight's fate, but at the same time she is keen on hindering him from pursuing his ambition ('prevent'). The verb 'prevent' has also been interpreted as meaning 'anticipate' (Jonson, 1969, p. 142, n. 16): in this sense, it may have been turned into a reference to Anne's overall anticipation, as it were, of Henry's destiny, as compared to James's plan. Both conceal references to actual events, which was not uncommon in Stuart masques (Orgel, 1990, p. 123; Orgel, 1965, p. 90): in particular, they seem to point to Anne's struggle to reconcile what *she* desired for Henry's education and what *his fate* – the one James had planned for him – was instead bound to be (Limon, 1991, p. 219).

Shortly after, Arthur appears in the form of his 'namesake' star Arcturus, and addresses the Lady, explaining who he is and why he is intervening:

> I thy Arthur am [. . .]
> Arcturus, once thy king, and now thy star [. . .]
> Nor let it trouble thy design, faire dame,
> That I am present to it with my flame
> And influence.
>
> (66, 70–4)

Arthur reassures the Lady that his presence and 'influence' are not meant to interfere with her plan, which is, nevertheless, precisely what is bound to happen. Indeed, throughout the masque, the Lady is not allowed to have any particular plans regarding Henry: her field of action is reduced to her being rather unwilling to let her knight leave 'to the court of Britany'. All her other actions are pre-ordered and dictated by Arthur's commands: first she is asked to deliver to Henry a shield 'by the fates devised' on behalf of Arthur (97), then she is ordered to deliver Merlin from the grave, so that he may read the 'truth' that Meliadus must follow, which is written on the shield itself (94–6). The episode of Merlin's deliverance from his tomb was added by Jonson. The several

versions of the Merlin story in Arthurian romance have him die through his entombment by the Lady of the Lake, an end he had foretold and that could not be avoided (Holbrook, 1978, pp. 769–70). In Jonson's masque, the situation is somewhat reversed: the Lady is here fulfilling no prophecy told by Merlin about his own death, and she is not obeying the wider scheme of fate. Instead, she must apologize to *Arthur* for her mistaken actions: 'My error I acknowledge, though too late / To expiate it; there's no resisting fate' (108–9). The 'error' – seemingly Merlin's entombment – cannot be ascribed to the plans of destiny; it was apparently her plan devised to resist fate, something she acknowledges to be impossible. Therefore, the lines of apology uttered by the Lady of the Lake may actually be the point of a passage meant to create a constrast between the male educational figure of Merlin as opposed to the female educational figure represented by the Lady of the Lake, a very frequent dichotomy in romance cycles (Pelner, 1966, p. 118). The Lady can either leave Merlin imprisoned in his grave, and deprive Meliadus/Henry of the 'prowess' necessary to complete his education, provided by the 'letters' or 'arts' Merlin can teach him (105, 107); or she can choose not to set Merlin free, and damage her knight's further progress at Court by preventing him from acquiring the theoretical training essential to his education as the future monarch (103–4). The Lady, as the circumstance implies, cannot but let Merlin go. Unlike Anne's interference in James's plans regarding Henry, the actions of this apologetic, maternal Lady of the Lake must be embedded within Arthur's scheme. Her role in the education and investiture of Meliadus/Henry must be inscribed within the trajectory devised by Arthur/James; when this does not take place, the Lady/Anne is in the wrong.

3. *Tethys' Festival*

Like James's masque, Anne's was meant to 'solemnize the creation of the high and mightie Prince Henry, Prince of Wales' (Er). The Queen's devising of her own masque as opposed to the King's was in itself, as already noted, a unique event which was not repeated for Charles's appointment in 1616. The overall intention of *Tethys' Festival* is strongly connected with *Prince Henry's Barriers*: the former's thematic parallels to the latter can hardly be dismissed as simple coincidences or as devices used for 'internal coherence' (Pitcher, 1984, p. 42). The main similarity concerns the fact that in both masques the female role is played by a water nymph involved in the education of a knight called Meliadus/Meliades. The main opposition lies, first of all, in the

name of the female character, Tethys, Queen of the Ocean: although it may be dismissed as a platitude (McNamara, 2000, p. 210), the actual lexical comparison Lady/Queen and Lake/Ocean could barely pass unnoticed to people who had also attended the performance of *Prince Henry's Barriers*. Another difference can be retraced in the degree of power accorded to the water nymph: whereas in Jonson's masque Meliadus receives a shield from Arthur/James (and the whole genealogy of the English kings he represents, including Elizabeth), via the Lady of the Lake, in *Tethys' Festival* arms are bestowed on him by the water deity.

In *Tethys' Festival* the scene is set in the Welsh harbour of Milford Haven. The masque begins with Zephirus (a young Prince Charles) announcing the arrival of Tethys and her river nymphs to Neptune/James and Meliades/Henry. Zephirus greets the King of the Ocean on her behalf, and she asks him to give Meliades a sword, 'which she unto Astraea sacred found', and a scarf 'wherein he may survay, / Infigur'd all the spacious Emperie / That he is borne unto another day' (E4v). After two dances and thanks to Mercury, Anne abandons the role of Queen of the Ocean she had already played as Bel-Anna in Jonson's *Masque of Queens* (1609) (Harris, 1973, p. 40), and pays homage to the King.

While in *Prince Henry's Barriers* the Lady of the Lake can only present Meliadus with a shield by acting as a proxy between Arthur and Merlin, the water nymph in Daniel's masque is able directly to provide her warrior son with arms and with an object on which part of an empire is depicted. A renowned thematic precedent to this scene can be found in Achilles' preparation for his fight against Hector: his mother Thetis, herself a water nymph, presents her son with new weapons, among which is a shield with the whole of the world engraved on it, up to the smallest detail. The main attributes characterizing the Tethys–Meliades bond resemble those in the rather common figurative representation of Thetis and Achilles: a water nymph with an educational role giving arms to her heroic son. Ancient and medieval additions to the original Homeric plot, mostly concerning Achilles' youth, had helped to turn Thetis' investiture of her son into a rite of passage from childhood to adulthood (Scherer, 1963, p. 222). In order to preserve him from the Trojan war, Thetis had sent Achilles to the island of Scyros, disguised as one of Lycomedes' daughters; upon learning of his being discovered by Ulysses, which entailed his having to go to war, she had then asked Hephaestus to make for him invincible weapons, a version of the story developed out of later commentaries and mythological dictionaries (Haverkamp-Begemann, 1975, pp. 24–5, 28–9). Together

with her earlier attempt to make Achilles immortal by dipping him into the river Styx when still a baby, and with her decision to have him educated by Chiron, Thetis' concern with her son's armour testifies to her protective love, to her ability to manage his education so as to make him a hero (Haverkamp-Begemann, 1975, p. 34), and to her willingness to fulfil his desire for honour (Leach, 1997, p. 355). As Thetis herself states in the *Iliad,* Achilles' education on her part 'well hath answered his owne worth, having growne, / As in a fruitfull soyle a tree' (Chapman, 1956, XVIII, pp. 390–2).

But the role of Tethys/Anne implies also a wider view of female power – completely opposed to the Elizabethan virginal persona and to James's Arthurian celebration – involving the concepts of creation and growth. This was possibly encouraged by an increasingly frequent conflation, especially in late sixteenth and early seventeenth-century English literature (Moorman, 1897, p. 29): Tethys, Queen of the Ocean, by whom all things were generated (Conti, 1588, p. 827; Cartari, 1603, p. 236), was often identified with Thetis, the water nymph and mother to Achilles. This same assimilation is also testified in registered references, in romance cycles, to the 'Dame du Lac' or Lady of the Lake as 'la fée de mer' (Lewis, 1932, pp. 241, 255). In a marginal comment in the printed edition, Daniel seemingly felt the need to clarify that the Tethys he was referring to was the 'mater Nympharum & fluuiorum' (E2r); but he also made use, as has been shown, of themes pertaining to Achilles' Thetis, and possibly decided to play on this ambiguity. As epitomized by Conti's treatment of the two nymphs under the heading *De Tethye & Thetide* (Conti, 1588, p. 824), the two figures had been undergoing conflation for a while before the seventeenth century, as female personifications of the sea: while only scholarly manuals strove to disentangle them, the fragile figure of Tethys, connected only with Oceanus, often came to be absorbed by Thetis – whether because of their increasingly mistaken pronunciation (Conti, 1588, p. 824), mutable orthography, or ambiguous contextualization. Indeed, Tethys could be found in the arms of Oceanus/Neptune, another frequent conflation of this kind (Cartari, 1603, p. 236) appearing also in Daniel's masque,[3] just as Thetis could be Achilles' mother, Neptune/Oceanus's grand-daughter, or his lover.

Therefore, the figure of Tethys could easily fulfil, thanks to thematic cross-references to commonplace classical knowledge, the requisites of the representation of a married, fertile sovereign, while embedding Thetis' attributes of a renowned model of female educational power. Daniel knew that he was not being faithful to the original figures: in

his preface he stated that, although his characters were not 'drawn in all proportions to the life of antiquity', from which he wished to 'emancipate' his inventions and be free to use his own images, he had tried to extract what he needed, while respecting as much as possible the original details (E2r). But this may have also been a reference to another issue. If Anne's Thetis-like features emphasize her strong motherly love and educational role in relation to the heir apparent, her representation as Tethys, the mother of the thirteen nymphs/rivers of England and Wales, also highlights her dominant role as *mater patriae*, paired with, but also opposed to, Neptune/Oceanus/James's role of *pater patriae* (Graham, 2001, p. 382). Daniel's masque does of course present the King's figure: Tethys greets him as Oceanus/Neptune indirectly through Zephirus, but also – and here it is the proud mother who speaks – she asks the latter to 'tell Meliades / The of-spring of his blood, / How she applaudes his good' (E4r). She, 'that intelligence which moues the Sphere / Of circling waues' (E4r), appears at Milford Haven, the harbour which saw the union of the Roses by Henry VII (E4v). This time the water nymph is not a secondary figure within James's Arthurian scheme; she does retain female power and stresses her being now part of the English dynasty as much as James is. Indeed, the sword Tethys gives to Henry is reminiscent of Elizabeth's representation as 'the maiden justice' (Strong, 1977, p. 190), as it is 'not to be unsheath'd but on iust ground' (E4v); it also has been handed down directly from Astraea (or Elizabeth I) to her successor – better, to her *female* successor – who will then trust it unto her male heir and future King of England. Anne justifies her right to educate the Prince with her being the *female* heir to Queen Elizabeth herself – a statement based on her gender, rather than on any genealogical connections.

The figure of Tethys therefore suggests the development of a new kind of symbolism around the Queen's role. She is no longer seen as the asexual *mater/pater patriae* married to the kingdom, and not to a human being, or as the virgin Astrea from the Golden Age, bringing plenty and wealth as a result of her peaceful and just reign (Yates, 1975, p. 67). She is now seen as a woman whose fertility is represented in symbolic form, but is also real, because her male heir summarizes in himself the whole future and safety of the kingdom. Yet there is another way in which Tethys provides a connection between Anne and Elizabeth. In her late years, when the promise of an heir had long been abandoned, Elizabeth was celebrated as Cynthia, Queen of the Seas, the virginal moon-goddess governing the ebbs and flows of the tides, who had led to the defeat of the Spanish Armada (King, 1990, pp. 59, 62).[4] As the new Queen of the Ocean bringing forth creation and the continuation of life, and unlike

the Elizabethan virginal moon-goddess, in *Tethys' Festival* Anne has the same symbolical right as her spouse to bestow on her male heir the justice and power of her female predecessor.

Prince Henry's Barriers and *Tethys' Festival* thus represent the clash between King James and Queen Anne regarding the education of Prince Henry, for which both seem to have wanted to be credited as much as, or even more than the other. At the same time, both James and Anne tried to justify their right to educate the Prince and celebrate his entry into the genealogy of the English kings through a connection with the preceding monarch. Both attempted to create a framework for the educational baptism of Prince Henry in which the issue of gender was clearly relevant: King Arthur and Merlin's prophecies; Astraea's return to earth thanks to the fertility of the new Queen of the Seas, bringing forth, through Henry, the beginning of a new Golden Age. These two masques represent a new, long unheard-of renegotiation of the role of female power following the reign of an unmarried, childless queen.

Notes

1. The first link involved Fleance, Banquo's son, who went to Wales to flee from Macbeth. There he married the daughter of King Griffiths ap Llewellyn; their son, Walter, returned to Scotland, and became High Lord Stewart, and the ancestor to the Scottish dynasty. The second link was provided by Margaret Tudor, daughter to Henry Tudor from the lineage of Cadwallader (the last British king), who then married King James IV of Scotland (Brinkley, 1967, pp. 16–17).
2. Another character named Meliadus, King of Leonnois and father to Tristan, is also present in the *Prophecies* and in the romance *Palamedes*. He is the Scottish knight who fights against Le Bon Chevalier Sans Peur, defeats him and earns the love of his mistress, the Queen of Scotland (Williams, 1977, p. 223). Their son, always called Meliadus, is raised by the Lady of the Lake, and becomes her lover – a story present only in the *Prophecies* (*Prophecies*, 1926, II, pp. 247–8). For Jonson's source see *Prophecies*, 1926, I, pp. 193ff., 295; for the King of Leonnois, see *Prophecies*, 1926, I, pp. 121, 190ff., 295.
3. Tethys is called 'wife of Neptune' ($E2^{r}$); she is then defined in relation to the 'great Monarch of Oceanus' ($E4^{v}$); the setting includes a statue of Neptune ($E2^{v}$), as if different from Oceanus.
4. The cult of the moon-goddess, based on Neoplatonic ideas, was possibly inspired by Giordano Bruno's presence at the Elizabethan Court in the mid-1580s (King, 1990, p. 59). It has been suggested that *Tethys' Festival* may prove and represent Daniel's knowledge of Bruno's philosophical ideas (Gatti, 1995, pp. 819–20). It is doubtful whether the audience would have understood this symbolism, and how it may have been connected with the specific celebration.

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Part III

In Mirrors more than One: Elizabeth and Representations of Female Sovereignty

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9

Performing the Apocalypse: Sibylline Prophecy and Elizabeth I

Jessica L. Malay

Many of the narratives connected to Elizabeth I which feature sibyls and sibylline prophecy were fashioned long before her birth. Elizabeth's first performance within these narratives occurred during the coronation celebrations for Anne Boleyn in 1533. The description of this celebration, published as 'The noble tryumphaunt coronacyon of quene Anne wyfe vnto the moost noble kynge Henry the viij', features a 'sumptuous pagent' at St Paul's gate where three sibyls, 'fayre ladyes virgyns', held tablets of gold and silver upon which were written: 'Come my love thou shalbe crowned', 'Lord god dyrecte my wayes', and 'Trust in god'. Beneath the sibyls' feet was a 'longe rol wherein was written this. Queen Anne thou shalte beare a newe sone of the kynges bloode and there shalbe a golden worlde unto thy people'. The pamphlet reports that 'wafers' of paper containing these lines were thrown over Anne's head. These scraps of paper were likely intended as souvenirs of potent political propaganda designed to communicate the message the King wished the audience to receive – that Anne would bear a son, like the 'son' of sibylline prophecy, who would bring about the return of the Christianized Golden Age (*The noble tryumphaunt coronacyon*, 1533, n.p.). These allusions were neatly employed to validate not only Henry VIII's marriage, but to imbue his unborn child with the myth of an apocalyptic destiny. The prophecy of the sibyls given in celebration of Anne Boleyn's coronation did not, of course, manifest itself in quite the way the audience expected. Instead, the sibylline verses would come to be reinterpreted and reinvigorated in Elizabeth's reign. Elizabeth I came to be figured as a new 'Sun' in many prophetic interpretations.

This leading role in the apocalyptic moment was one that Henry VIII and even Henry VII had long sought to claim through a variety

of means, including the appropriation of sibylline prophecy. The sibyls were an important voice in the eschatological narrative that had developed by the later Middle Ages, though their history was much more ancient. The sibyls and sibylline prophecy were well established in ancient Greece by the fifth century. Their prophecies played a part in Roman politics for nearly a thousand years.[1] Sibylline prophecy also flourished within the early Christian church. Despite its pagan origin, sibylline prophecy was usefully employed by early Christian writers including Lactantius, Prudentius and Augustine of Hippo who believed they found evidence to support the messianic mission of Christ in these ancient texts due to Jewish material that had found its way into sibylline prophecy (Bartlett, 1985, p. 36).

Sibylline apocalyptic discourse was well established in the British Isles as early as the seventh century. The prophecies of the Tiburtine sibyl were particularly influential. They were composed as a dream narrative in which the apocalyptic end of humanity is predicted as the world nears the last of nine generations. In these last days, according to the Latin versions of the Tiburtine prophecy, a Last Emperor will emerge whose primary function will be to defeat a powerful foreign enemy and prepare the way for the second coming of Christ (see Alexander, 1978, p. 6 and McGinn, 1979, pp. 45–50). Throughout the Middle Ages and into the early modern period, the ambiguity of the Last Emperor figure allowed for easy appropriation by those seeking divine justification for their political actions. As Norman Cohn notes, the Last Emperor prophecies 'proved infinitely adaptable: constantly edited and reinterpreted to fit the preoccupations of the moment' (1970, p. 33).

Medieval sibylline prophecy concerning the Last Emperor closely connected the sacred with the dynastic. It was thus seen as a useful tool by Henry VII as he sought to secure his somewhat tenuous claim to the English throne. In celebrations and verse Henry VII was lauded as this Last Emperor, ruling through a period of peace and plenty that was said to precede the second coming of Christ. The court poet, Johannes Opicius, in his presentation manuscript, *Praises to the King,* (1492–93) applauds Henry VII's reign by associating him with this period of peace:

> Henry before all, who, in peace and in war, betters all men whomsoever all lands and regions hold, who guards the British peoples under his joyous peace [. . .] Now the Age of Iron recedes and already a truly Golden Age comes upon us. (Carlson, 2002, pp. 889, 894)

Certainly, Henry VII's role in ending the civil wars did open a space for the appropriation of some elements of the apocalyptic narrative. However, what he really needed was an Antichrist figure. In the Middle Ages this role had often been assigned to Mohammed and those associated with the conflict between Islamic and Christian nations. However, Henry VIII was to find a closer candidate and one who was incredibly suited to serve as the sibylline Antichrist. Henry's break with the Roman Catholic Church provided the opportunity, and indeed the necessity, to position the Pope as the Antichrist in order for Henry to claim the mantle of the Last Emperor.

Henry VIII also benefited from his father's construction of their Tudor lineage that included Constantine and King Arthur leading to the present Tudor Kings.[2] Through this lineage Henry VIII could position the Church of England as a true inheritor of divine sanction, and himself as God's instrument of the last days. John Gough's 1539 translation of Jean Lemaire de Belges's *Traité des Schismes* (1511) clearly positions Henry as the Last Emperor. In this work, the sibyl of Cumae predicts: 'An eagle will come [...] accompanied by many griffons, and rushing down upon the source of unction it shall drive him who sits in the shepherd's seat [Rome] from the fifth to the seventh climate [Northern Europe]' (Lemaire de Belges, 1539; quoted in Britnell, 1979, p. 156). Gough intended this work to support Henry VIII's break with the Pope, arguing that the break was not only politically, but spiritually necessary. He further asserts that this separation from the Roman church had long been foretold by the sibyls and other prophets. Gough does not go quite so far as to identify Henry VIII with the Last Emperor, but he clearly sees him as fulfilling this role. The sibylline pageant during the coronation celebrations for Anne Boleyn does suggest that Henry VIII, while happy to appropriate Last Emperor imagery for himself, was also willing to be the conduit, like Arthur and Constantine, through which the Last Emperor would come into the world.

Certainly the political conflicts caused by the English Reformation gave rise to a reinvigoration of sibylline prophecy in the service of reformist belief and policy. Just as early Christian writers in the third and fourth centuries had appropriated the authority of sibylline prophecy to strengthen their position in a dangerous political climate, so also did early English reformists find a wealth of material to bolster their arguments concerning the legitimacy of the reformed English church. It certainly helped that much early Christian material interpolated into sibylline prophecies was hostile to Rome. Indeed, even early Roman

material often predicted a dire fate for this city. John Jewel drew upon sibylline prophecy in this manner, writing:

> Sybilla sayeth [the Antichrist] shal have a white heade: and shal bée called by a name much like to Pontus [...] Sybilla wrote two thousand yeares sithence, That the greatest terrour and furie of his [the Antichrist's] empire, and the greatest woe that hee shall worke, shall be by the bankes of Tyber [and] Antichrist shall be a Bishop and placed at Rome. (Jewel, 1584, p. 322)

Several other religious reformers including George Joye, John Merbecke, and most influentially, John Foxe also used the testimony of the sibyls to identify the Pope as the Antichrist.

Elizabeth's ascension to the throne provided the opportunity, and indeed required, that she be written into the eschatological narrative. The fluidity of sibylline prophecy along with Elizabeth's heritage, gender, and sexual status as a virgin worked to create a meta-narrative which served the often competing goals of many factions within the culture. This meta-narrative positioned Elizabeth as a figure akin to, though not necessarily identical with, the Last Emperor. This ambiguity allowed Elizabeth to be assigned a variety of roles within the narrative of salvation including the woman clothed with the sun from Revelation 12; incarnations of the Blessed Mary; a worldly ruler who protects the Church in preparation for the coming of Christ, a prophetess preparing the world for the end days, and finally the persona Elizabeth herself most often employed – that of the 'elect' handmaid of God.

John Foxe promotes Elizabeth as a second Constantine, placing her portrait within the C that begins the name Constantine in his 1563 edition of *Actes and Monuments*. He describes Constantine as 'the greate and mightie Emperour, the sonne of Helene an Englyshe woman of this your Realme and countrie' (sig. B1r), forming a connection between Constantine and the Queen by blood, religion and, as Foxe clearly believes, apocalyptic destiny. In the 1570 edition he greatly expands his use of sibylline apocalyptic material to prove the Antichrist is the Pope and that the end days are near. In this and the 1576 and 1583 editions the Queen's portrait sits in the capital C that begins the word Christ, further associating her with an important role in preserving Christ's church in these last days. John Bale also placed Elizabeth in a leading eschatological role. In a 1562 interlude, *A Newe Comedy*, he claims that according to prophecy, Elizabeth was 'elected of the lorde [...] to have

Goddes lawe restored' (Bale, 1562, sig. L1v). In this same entertainment he exhorts the reader:

> Praye we to the lorde, for the longe contynuaunce
> Of Quene Elizabeth, in this worldes habytacion
> And that of her Noblesse, she have true mayntenaunce
> In the pryncyples of this most worthy foundacion
> That she maye to Christ, brynge us from desolation
>
> (Bale, 1562, sig. L1v)

Here Bale certainly alludes to the sibylline Last Emperor who, as Paul Alexander explains, 'functions as a national deliverer and just native ruler' (Alexander, 1978, p. 6). Clearly, Bale's play claims a particularly powerful role for Elizabeth within the narrative of the apocalypse.

Another writer familiar with apocalyptic discourse was Edwin Helwys. In his treatise *A maruell, deciphered* (1589) he identifies Elizabeth with the woman clothed with the sun from Revelation. In Helwys's exegesis of Revelation 12 he explains that Elizabeth is 'confirmed with an assured confidence in hir Christ and God, as a maine piller erected by devine providence, to bear the weightie frame of reparation of this decayed and desolate Church of God' (Helwys, 1589, sig. B2r), through 'her vehement desire [...] that God may be glorified effectually' (p. 3). He specifically interprets Revelation 12:2 as directly relevant to Elizabeth, positioning her as an exalted Marian figure:

> *And she was with Childe, and cried traveling in Birth and was pained readie to be delivered;* so as if there be anie woman that with an ardent & an holy desire, traveileth with zeale, cost and danger, and with power inforceth the birth of the childe, and the Lorde Jesus which is his sacred worde, and the Image of himselfe, and her [Elizabeth's] vehement desire made knowen by lawes, advertisments, and proclamations, to all nations farre beyonde the reach of all crying, discovering hir paine and rediness to have the same delivered and published to all creatures Such a woman effecteth this prophesie. (Helwys, 1589, p. 3)

Thus, according to Helwys, Elizabeth makes way for the second coming of Christ and is the figure foretold in Revelation. This conflation of Elizabeth with the Blessed Mary was common in contemporary discourse about the apocalypse.

However, perhaps one of the more blatant examples Marian imagery applied to Elizabeth can be found in Jane Seager's hand-crafted gift book entitled *The Divine Prophesies of the Ten Sibills* (1589).[3] In this book Seager translates prophecies of the sibyls and organizes them in such a way as to emphasize the conflated role of a Madonna/just ruler figure in the apocalyptic mission of Christ. The manuscript translates ten of twelve sibylline prophecies of Christ, from Filippo Barbieri's fifteenth-century *Sibyllarum et prophetarum de Christo vaticinia* ([1481], 1520). In this series of poems Seager rearranges the sequence from her source text in order to form an eschatological narrative which positions Elizabeth in a leading role. In the first poem – a prophecy by the sibyl Agrippa (also Agrippina or Egyptia) dated 2720 Anno Mundi – the sibyl speaks of a 'Virgine trew without all spot or blame', an obvious Marian allusion, but equally useful as a reference to Elizabeth. In the next prophecy by the sibyl Samia, Seager extends the Marian imagery combining it with the well-known iconography of the pelican feeding her chicks from the blood pecked from her breast, long associated with Elizabeth: '[She] Shall beare, and nourish hym wth humane brest' (p. 190). This poem positions Elizabeth as a mother figure nurturing and protecting the embattled Protestant church, while at the same time it alludes to the self sacrifice of Christ. Later poems in the series become more apocalyptic in nature, featuring a virgin, a just prince, and a Christ figure on the eve of the eschaton. Jane Seager was associated with the militant Protestant faction of the Earl of Leicester through her brothers, William and Francis Segar [*sic*]. Her collection of sibylline prophecies, designed as a gift book for Queen Elizabeth, clearly participates in promoting the political goals of this faction by stressing Elizabeth's role in the protection of the Protestant church seen by many as the true church of God.

Certainly the Earl of Leicester had long understood the usefulness of sibylline imagery in communicating his political ideas concerning the protection and promotion of the Protestant cause. A sibyl appears in Leicester's famous 1575 celebrations presented to Elizabeth at Kenilworth Castle. Upon the Queen's arrival, one of the 'ten sibyls' greets her with a 'prophecy certeyn, of mooch and long prosperitee health and felicitee' (Laneham, 1575, pp. 7–8). It is important to note that Robert Laneham, who records this moment, describes this sibyl as one of the 'ten sibyls'. Collections of sibyls traditionally came in sets of ten, or twelve. The set of ten first appears in the *Divine Institutes* (*c*.303–11) by Lactantius and became the canonical list of ancient, but Christianized sibyls (Lactantius, 2003, pp. 70–1). Lactantius's writings

closely associated the ten sibyls with the Christian history of salvation, including apocalypse. Thus Laneham's identification of the Kenilworth sibyl as one of the canonical ten sibyls places Elizabeth yet again within the discourse of apocalypse. The presence of this figure communicates a subtle insistence that the Queen fulfil her role as Christ's Last Emperor in the ongoing struggle of reformed religion against the forces of the Antichrist Rome.

This message becomes even more clear when one examines the sibyl's speech recorded by George Gascoigne:

> Sibylla being placed in an arbor in the parke, neere the highway, where the Queenes majestie came, did step out, and pronounced as followeth:
>
> All hayle, all hayle, thrice happy Prince,
> I am Sibylla she,
> Of future chaunce, and ever happ,
> forshewing what shalbe.
> As now the dewe of heavenly gifts,
> full thick on you doeth fall,
> Even so shall vertue more and more,
> augment your yeares withal.
> The rage of warre bound fast in chaines,
> shall never stirre ne move:
> But peace shall governe all your daies,
> encreasing Subjects love.
> You shalbe called the Prince of peace,
> And peace shall be your shield.
>
> (Gascoigne, 1575, sig. A1r–A1v)[4]

As the speech continues, the sibyl expounds upon this prophesied peace. The 'prince of peace' is an uncomplicated allusion to the Last Emperor, who, as discussed above, was to reign over a period of peace until the time of the final apocalyptic battle. This peace supposedly occurs after this emperor figure defeats an enemy that threatens Christianity. In 1575 Elizabeth was considering the necessity of aiding the French Huguenots after the death of Charles IX as the accession of Henri III threatened to exacerbate the already tense religious/political situation on the Continent. Leicester and more militant elements of the court were firmly in support of greater military involvement. Thus these lines, which at first appear to be fairly conventional courtly rhetoric, contain

a much more urgent and politically charged message – in order to bring about the increase of 'happy dayes' referred to in the conclusion of the address, the Queen is reminded of her eschatological responsibilities.

Another entertainment in this 1575 progress, the Woodstock entertainment, also participates in this discourse of the coming eschaton, delivered through pastoral rhetoric. The reply to two lovers, in the 'Hermit's Tale', contains the same message as the sibylline verses at Kenilworth. The sibyl's reply to two lovers is suitably enigmatic but easily interpreted within the context of the imagery of the last days. The couple are told:

> That as they were nowe coupled by this fortune, so they should never depart fellowship, till they had found out a place where men were most strong, women most fayre, the countrey most fertile, the people were wealthy, the government most just, and the Princes most wourthy: so should the Lady see that would content her, so should the Knighte heare that would comforte him. (*Queenes Majesties Entertainment*, 1585, sig. B2v)

After the Hermit concludes his tale of the lovers, including their encounter with the sibyl, he turns and addresses Elizabeth directly: 'And nowe beste Ladye and most beautifull, so termed of the Oracle and so thought in the world: what [...] Sibilla shewed Caudina and Loricus [...] by your most happy coming is verified' (*Queenes Majesties Entertainment*, 1585, sig. B3v). These lines, reminiscent indeed of the verses presaging her birth in her mother's coronation pageant and amplified by the works of Foxe, Bale, Joye and others, emphasize Elizabeth's crucial role in the Christianized history of humanity as prophesied by the sibyls. These pageant texts highlight her role as the ruler who battles the Antichrist (figured as papal power) in preparation for the coming of Christ. The pageants of 1575 also remind Elizabeth that her role must be active and participatory, and that a passive response to Catholic aggression is dangerous not only to her own kingdom, but to the kingdom of Christ. This was certainly a message the more militant faction of her court wished to communicate, but it was also a message Elizabeth herself understood.

Elizabeth was certainly familiar with the eschatological discourse of the period, claming in a 1566 speech to Parliament: 'it is said I am no divine. Indeed, I studied nothing else but divinity till I came to the crown' and later in 1585 affirmed: 'I am supposed to have many studies, but most philosophical. I must yield this to be true: that I suppose few (that be no professors) have read more' (Elizabeth I, 2000,

pp. 96, 182). Certainly the Royal libraries contained numerous texts, including sibylline texts, which foretold of the end times and asserted a key role for the Kings of Britain. Elizabeth's own writing, while never specifically quoting sibylline or other prophetic texts, crafted her own understanding of her role in recognizably apocalyptic terms. In 1563 Elizabeth asserts: 'But I hope I shall die in quiet with *Nunc Dimittis*' (Elizabeth I, 2000, p. 80). This statement forms an allusion that connects her with Simeon in Luke 2.29 who is inspired by the Holy Spirit to enter the temple and become a key participant in Christ's first coming. Through his recognition and proclamation of Christ, he fulfils his destiny and can thus pray, 'Lord, now lettest thy servant depart in peace'. Elizabeth seems to be inferring in the quotation above that she too will participate in a key moment in Christian history. Interestingly, the biblical scene from Luke also includes the prophetess Anna, who on this occasion prophesies on the redemption of Jerusalem. As discussed above, Elizabeth was often seen to play an important role in the establishment of the New Jerusalem of the second coming (Luke 2, 36–8).

Indeed, Elizabeth constantly refers to herself as a 'handmaid' of God – often politicizing this term. For example, in her 1563 collection of prayers she prays:

> God of peace an concord, who hast chosen me Thy handmaid to be over thy people that I may preserve them in Thy peace, be present and rule me with the Spirit of Thy wisdom, that according to Thy will I may defend a Christian peace with all peoples. (Elizabeth I, 2000, p. 139)

Certainly in this prayer Elizabeth asks for a Last Emperor-like role, as the bringer of an authentic Christian and universal peace. In a 1569 prayer she is even more emphatic:

> Father most high, who hast laid out the universe with Thy Word and adorned it with the Holy Spirit, and who has appointed me as monarch of the British kingdom, favor me by thy goodness [...] to gain release from the enemies of religion as well as those who hate me – Antichrists, Pope lovers, atheists, and all persons who fail to obey Thee and me. (Elizabeth I, 2000, p. 163)

Perhaps the most telling moment in this quotation is her assertion of a sacred partnership through the phrase 'Thee and me'. Certainly this prayer reveals Elizabeth's particular understanding of her role in the history of salvation and the coming apocalypse. There are many other

moments within her writings that reflect this understanding. In her manuscript prayer book, written between 1579 and 1582, Elizabeth asserts her divine election: 'Thou who has raised and exalted me by Thy providence to the throne, and hast crowned me with peace, to this end: that I may govern my people and nourish Thy Church' (Elizabeth I, 2000, p. 314). Near the end of her life, in the 'Golden Speech' of 1601 she claimed to have 'ever used to set the Last Judgement Day before my eyes' (Elizabeth I, 2000, p. 339).

Of course, Elizabeth and indeed the entire population of England would have been hard pressed to ignore what many believed to be harbingers of the 'Judgement Day', that forever deferred moment that excited the imagination of populations in times of crisis. The religious conflicts between England and Catholic Europe convinced many reformists that the end days were near. Added to this were significant celestial and natural events occurring at regular intervals. In the 1570s two noteworthy astronomical events captured the attention and the imagination of many. In 1572 a new star, or what we now know was a supernova, was discovered in the constellation Cassiopeia and believed by many to be a sign of the approaching eschaton. The English mathematician Thomas Digges recorded seeing this light on 17 November. The star increased in brightness throughout November, and at its peak could be seen during the day when it then began to fade away, disappearing from the sight of the naked eye in 1574 (Pumfrey and Riley, 2008, p. 1). Earlier that year an unknown writer recorded an event that mingles actual natural phenomena with episodes recorded in Revelation. In this narrative the writer recounts that on the night of 20 January 1572, an unnamed town experienced high winds that toppled three church steeples that destroyed nineteen houses. The winds were followed by thunder and a hail storm. Next came an earthquake, to which the writer adds the prosaic detail of pewter dishes falling off shelves. Finally in a brightly illuminated night sky a huge cloud appeared which took the shape of a man with a sword in one hand and a cup in another. From the cup flowed blood and here the symbolism takes a decidedly Revelation-like turn with a boy crying, 'woe woe woe be unto the dwellers upon the erthe', a quotation taken from Revelation 8:13.[5] Thomas Rogers, in his preface to his 1577 translation of an apocalyptic text by Sheltco à Geveren, *Of the Ende of This World* interpreted such events as directly relating to the present time, noting that:

> John in his Revelation dyd foretell, that immediatly after he had seene an Angell flying thorowe the midst of heaven, crying with a

> loude voyce, Woe, Woe, Woe, to the inhabitants of the earthe, from the other voyces of those three Angels, which were yet to sounde, the fift Angell dyd first sounde, and he sawe a starre falling uppon the earth, which was the fall of the Popes holynes. (Sheltco à Geveren, 1577, n.p.)

He goes on to link Elizabeth and sibylline prophecy to the narrative of the end days:

> So thou seest O daughter of Sion [Elizabeth] pure, & unspotted Virgin [...] the true and faythfull spouse of Christ [...] tryumph now thou daughter of Sion, rejoyce daughter of Hierusalem, thou daughter of peace rejoyce. For behold thy husband, the King will come, thy saviour wil come to thee [...] like a King of all Kings in majestie triumphing. (Sheltco à Geveren, 1577, n.p.)

That Elizabeth was not immune to the widespread interest in celestial events is shown by her summoning of John Dee to court to explain the significance of the comet of 1577 (Dee, 1726, p. 521).

That the Elizabethans connected these events to sibylline prophecy of the last days is made clear in a treatise written by John Harvey in 1588. Here, while Harvey's purpose is actually to insert scepticism into these interpretations of signs, he does acknowledge that many did connect these celestial events with sibylline prophecy, more specifically the Tiburtine sibyl's medieval apocalyptic prophecy. He records 'the late revivall of that famous oracle bearing the name of Sybilla Tiburtina in the title' and reports that the '*Sybilline sydous*, or woonderous star' of the end days prophecy is 'lately supposed by divers Mathematicians' to be the 'new strange star in Cassiopeia, which appéered, Anno 1572' (Harvey, 1588, pp. 41–2). The crises of the 1570s certainly encouraged many to view their time as the end time. Constant threats and very real plots throughout this and succeeding decades ensured that this anxiety continually informed political discourse. Many believed that sibylline and other prophetic texts could provide them with some guidance to right action in accordance to divine will thus allowing them to cope with the social and political uncertainties they faced. Prophecies of the end days thus enabled individuals, including Elizabeth, to situate themselves within a narrative of divine history in which even their very vulnerability proved their election.

The prophecies of the sibyls were interpreted as guaranteeing that despite this vulnerability, the English people would be triumphant.

This is the theme of Lodowick Lloyd's *Certaine English Verses* (1586) celebrating Elizabeth's preservation in the aftermath of the Babington plot of 1586. In these verses he assures Elizabeth that she is defended by angels insisting that her victory is assured according to sibylline prophecy:

> Thunders, hailstones, brimstone, fier, your foes shal speede
> Angels armd, hosts from hie, God himself will say.
> To Curria trudge, of Sibill knowe your fates.
>
> (sig. A3v)

Within the poem he also employs indigenous prophetic traditions such as the prophecies of Merlin, to assure Elizabeth of her status as a Last Emperor figure, concluding the poem with a reference to the prophesied peace connected to this figure: 'yet glad,/ these happie Halcions daies to see in Britaine land' (sig. A4v).

Another work on this theme is a manuscript programme for a painting called the *Allegory of the Tempest* likely designed by Charles Seckford of Woodbridge, Suffolk. Again, the subject matter concerns the preservation of the Queen, perhaps also in response to the Babington Plot.[6] Within the allegorical scheme are references to the Antichrist, while the presence of the 'Sybilla Cumana' alludes to Virgil's fourth eclogue – considered in the period to be a prophetic text of the sibyl of Cumae foretelling Christ's first nativity, the second coming of Christ and the resultant Christianized Golden Age of the New Jerusalem. An allusion to the thousand-year life span of the sibyl of Cumae as well as her virginity, an inextricable part of this sibyl's fame, was also usefully inserted in this scheme celebrating Elizabeth's preservation in the wake of assassination plots.

Certainly concerns about Elizabeth's vulnerability and thus the vulnerability of the realm continued to feed political discourse in the later decades of her life. By the 1590s it was not only the assassin's guile that concerned many, but also Elizabeth's increasing age and her reluctance to name an heir. This perhaps explains the tone of William Gager's verses in celebration of Elizabeth's visit to Oxford in 1592 which are hesitant and posit the very event that is most feared:

> Will any black day ever dawn for me on which I must weep for Elisa, murdered by wounding? Let that day not dawn, or God ever suffer such a crime.

> Nor let poison or treachery take you off, nor the dagger or violence. May you pass away gently, brought to ripe old age by the Fates, and you must trust that thus the seeress Sibyl has prophecized.
>
> (Gager, 1994, pp. 40–3)

Here Gager recognizes death will take Elizabeth, but consoles himself (and the audience) that she will not die by murder, but through the natural passage of life as foreseen by sibylline prophecy – though to what prophecy he alludes, is unclear. Increasingly in this last decade discourse surrounding Elizabeth is subtly reshaped to position her, like her father and grandfather before her, not as the Last Emperor, but as the conduit through which this figure will come to power. However, Elizabeth's status as a woman and a perpetual virgin required a reconceptualization of this role. Sibylline imagery proved particularly suitable for this purpose. Thus increasingly she is represented as not only the subject of sibylline prophecy but as a sibyl herself. This representation in no way diminished her status given the authority of the sibyls within the early Christian texts of Lactantius and Augustine. Lactantius described sibyls as bearing the voice of God (p. 70), while Augustine asserted that the sibyls who prophesied the coming of Christ belonged to the 'City of God' (p. 851). The twelfth-century theologian Peter Abelard insisted that the sibyls surpassed not only the prophets but the evangelists in piety and election (Dronke, 1990, p. 3). Thus applying the term of sibyl to Elizabeth was another way to position her in a unique an exalted relationship with the divine.

An early instance of Elizabeth's representation as a prophetess or sibylline figure occurs in an elegy Richard Edwards wrote on the death of Sir Edward Saunders, Lord Chief Baron of the Exchequer in 1585. In an attempt to console his readers for the loss of the great man he asserts the divine role of Elizabeth in the narrative of salvation, and their own participation in this salvation through her: 'Here Cuma is, here Sibill reignes, on Delphos seate to sit,/ Here she like Phaebus rules, that can Gordius knot unknit' (sig. C2v). Like the sibyl of Cumae, Elizabeth is positioned as the divinely appointed prophetess, this time of the second coming of Christ. The allusion to Phoebus Apollo positions her reign as that of a 'Sun', or Christ-like figure; and finally, the untying of the Gordian knot was an image often associated with the coming of the divinely appointed ruler. Here Edwards positions Elizabeth as not only a just native ruler, but as a figure who understands the mind of God; a prophetess as well as the subject of prophecy.

Thomas Watson, like Brown, also employs the trope of Elizabeth as sibyl in his *An eglogue upon the death of the right honorable Sir Francis Walsingham* (1590). It is of course useful to note that the deaths of Walsingham and Saunders, as well as other key figures in Elizabeth's government, meant that the iconography connected to Elizabeth had to be developed in such a way that her actual physical presence was not necessary for her to continue her role in the ongoing narrative of salvation. Certainly, as she aged, many writers sought to create an image of Elizabeth that would survive her death. Watson's elegy shows this process of transformation as he employs the figure of Diana, long associated with Elizabeth, emphasizing Diana's prophetic nature:

Yet beuteous Nymph thy carefull mother lives [. . .]
From dread Diana, earths and heavens delight, Diana, glorie of hir sexe and kinde;
Diana, wondrous mirrour of our daies; Diana matchlesse Queene of Arcadie [. . .]
Diana, Sibill for hir secret skill; Diana, pieties chiefe earthlie friend;
Diana, holie both in deede and will; Diana whose just praises have no end.

(1590, sig. C3v)

Here, the sibylline or prophetic qualities of the goddess Diana are emphasized, while the figure also continues to serve as symbol of just governance and the protector of reformed Christianity. As for Saunders, for Watson Elizabeth is both a prophetess and the subject of prophecy.

In the 1591 entertainment at Elvetham, Elizabeth is figured again as both the just native ruler of Last Emperor myth and quite unequivocally as a sibyl. These verses, like those above, reveal the attempt by later writers to insert a post-death divinity in the iconography associated with Elizabeth, while retaining Elizabeth's living status as a divinely elected ruler. This is shown in the entertainment's 'Oration of the Faere Neara':

Thine eyes (Neaera) shall in time behold
A sea-borne Queene, worthy to governe Kings,
On her depends the Fortune of thy boat
Her beames yeeld gentle influence, like fayre stares,
Her silver soundinge word is prophesie.

Speake, sacred Sybill, give some prosperous name [to the small ship in front of Elizabeth]
That it may dare attempt a golden fleece,
Or dive for pearles, and lay them in thy lap.
For winde and waves, and all the worlde besides,
Will make her way, whom thou shalt doome to blisse
For what is Sybils speech, but oracle?

(*The Honorable Entertainement*, 1591, sig. D1v)

These verses give voice to the divinity of Elizabeth as prophetess, while continuing to recognize her as the just native ruler. They also assert the validity of the sacral/imperialist goals developing amongst political and mercantile circles. These goals required a strong sense of divine approbation for the legitimate continuance of exploration and colonization projects so important to the country's prosperity and security.

Elizabeth herself was not disdainful of the role of sibyl, or prophetess. In a prayer composed between 1579 and 1582 she asks for the gift of 'prophecy in deliberation' (*Elizabeth I, Collected Works*, 2000, p. 318), amongst other gifts in an allusion to a tradition found in Josephus. Josephus, in his *Jewish Antiquities* speaks of the three greatest gifts God gives a ruler: the government of one's nation, the dignity of the high priesthood, and the power of prophecy (Alexander, 1978, p. 11).[7] The iconography associated with Elizabeth attributed all three of these roles to her. She was continually praised as a just governor, seen as the most important political figure in the ongoing struggles of Protestants against Rome, and in later years given the label of sibyl or prophetess of the British nations. Upon her death, two of these three gifts, that of protector of Protestantism and just governor, were taken away from her and bestowed upon her successor, James I. However, for a short time after her death she retained her role as a prophetess. In an anonymous French manuscript, 'L'Himne de la Paix au tres-auguste et serenissime Roy d'Angleterre, d'Escosse et d' Irlande' (*c.*1604–12), Elizabeth is presented as a prophetess who proclaims the divine election of James and his son Henry as those princes of Peace that were for so long associated with sibylline discourse of the apocalypse. Before her birth, her mother was feted with sibylline prophecies announcing the coming of a new 'son'. Elizabeth, despite her gender, was transformed into a celestial 'sun' through sibylline imagery. It is fitting then that after her death she herself became a sibyl prophesying the arrival of another 'son'.

Notes

1. Their most important manifestation in Roman culture was through the *libri sibyllini*, initially three books that according to legend were acquired from the Sibyl of Cumae (the Roman sibyl) by King Tarquinius Priscus sometime in the fifth century.
2. Roman emperor Constantine ended Christian persecution and promoted Christianity as the state religion in the fourth century, while the mythic King Arthur was credited with protecting the British Christian community from the onslaught of Germanic tribes in the fifth or sixth century. These two figures were seen as important in the Christian historical narrative of salvation.
3. All quotations from Jane Seager's sibylline poems are from Malay, 2006. For further discussion of these poems see also Malay, 2010. The original manuscript is London, British Library, MS Additional 10037.
4. Gascoigne attributes the poem of the sibyl to a M. Hanneys, who is listed as a master of the Queen's chapel.
5. London, British Library, MS Additional 24663, ff.6r–7v ('A sign in 1571 [1572]').
6. London, British Library, MS Sloane 1041, part A ('Allegory of the Tempest'). See also Evett, 1989, p. 140.
7. This tradition can be found in Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, xiii, 10.7, section 299. Elizabeth had access to Josephus in numerous printed editions. She also possessed a manuscript version of the works of Josephus in Latin (London, British Library, MS Royal 13 D. VI, VII) which appears in the Westminster inventory of 1542.

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10

Under Italian Eyes: Petruccio Ubaldini's Verbal Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I

Giovanni Iamartino

Archive material and historical research have shown that the image, habits and behaviour of such a public figure as Queen Elizabeth I were generally and inevitably described in biased and stereotyped ways, either eulogistically – in Britain and other north-European Reformed countries – or censoriously – in Mediterranean, Catholic countries. The juxtaposition was not that crude, however, because public and private statements on the Queen were influenced by both the current state of national and international affairs at any specific time during her long reign and the background, aim and self-interest of the different persons expressing their own feelings and ideas about the Queen (see, among others, Strong, 1977; King, 1990; Walker, 1998; Mendelson, 2003). It is the purpose of this study to consider how Queen Elizabeth was described, referred and addressed to by one such person, named Petruccio Ubaldini, a man who spent most of his life at Elizabeth's court and tried to act as a link and an intermediary between the Queen and the Italian political and cultural world. My research is based on the work done from the 1960s on by such first-rate students of sixteenth-century Anglo-Italian relations as Giuliano Pellegrini, Anna Maria Crinò, Sergio Rossi and, more recently, Francesca Bugliani Knox: these scholars edited and/or studied Ubaldini's manuscript works and tried to gather together and contextualize the scanty available information on his life: on the foundations of their seminal work (Pellegrini, 1967; Crinò, 1960, 1968, 1969, 1973, 1979; Rossi, 1959, 1967, 1969, 1986, 1989, 1994; Bugliani, 1991, 1992, 1994, 1995), I will review all those writings where Ubaldini provides useful material for his own 'portrait' of Queen Elizabeth. The textual data I will be considering can be divided into three groups: those dealing with Ubaldini himself and/or his relationship with the Queen;

his descriptions of or allusions to the Queen in his books meant for a British audience; and his writings on the Queen meant for an Italian audience. My aim is not simply to anthologize relevant passages, but also – if and when possible – to read between the lines of Ubaldini's writings in order to discern his real thoughts and feelings, as well as their evolution through the years.

In Lewis Einstein's words, Petruccio Ubaldini is 'an example of the better type of the Italian adventurers then to be found at every European court' (Einstein, 1902, p. 190); and an adventurer he was, like many of the Italian expatriates in Tudor England. What is to be noticed in his self-introduction to *Militia del Gran Dvca di Thoscana*, his last volume, published in London in 1597, is that Ubaldini emphasizes his many years of service to the Tudors, first under Henry VIII in 1545 and later under Edward VI; having left for Italy on Mary's accession to the throne, Petruccio is intentionally vague here about the date when he got back to England (but some of his letters seem to prove that he was in London during Mary's reign); as a matter of fact, he says in the passage referred to that he has been in the service of Queen Elizabeth since 1563.[1] What this service consisted in is not clear at all: since Ubaldini was no longer young enough to be a soldier, a modern critic writes that:

> from 1562 onwards, he was able to fill the vacuum left by the rupture in official diplomatic and ecclesiastical contacts between England and Italy. He became almost the only well-placed Italian reporter of English affairs during the second half of the sixteenth century. For lack of better sources, rulers in both England and Italy turned to Ubaldini. For Queen Elizabeth his connections with rulers and government officials in Italy made him more valuable than other Italian exiles, most of whom were miniaturists, painters, secretaries, musicians and teachers of Italian without important connections in their former or adopted home. Ubaldini, by contrast, corresponded with the secretaries of the Dukes of Florence and numbered Henry Fitzalan, Earl of Arundel, Walsingham, William Cecil, Lord Thomas Howard and other important personages amongst his acquaintances. Certainly Queen Elizabeth thought that his services were valuable enough to grant him a salary. (Bugliani, 1994, p. 178)

Bugliani is certainly right in mentioning Ubaldini's upper-class connections but I feel that she overestimates the role he played: of course, some of his tasks may have gone unnoticed, some of his assignments may have been confidential and off the record, but the positive evidence

we have points to a humbler role. He did act as a secretary to the Queen when he wrote a letter for her to the Grand Duke of Tuscany, but that seems to have been the only one;[2] one way or another he must have been involved in the dealings at the French court for the planned marriage between Elizabeth and the Duc d'Alençon, though another Italian, Guido Cavalcanti, played a much more significant role. Probably more in line with his life at Elizabeth's court were 'his travel and paynes taken in preparation' for a Masque in June 1572, 'the translating of certen speeches into Italian to be vsed in the maske, the making of Tables for them, the writing faire in the same Tables, and [...] his chardges in travelling About the same' for the Christmas-time mask of 11 January 1578 (Feuillerat, 1908, pp. 160, 301), and even his willingness to be an actor in a performance of 1576 (see the undated letter quoted in Chambers, 1904, II, pp. 264–5). Above all, what Bugliani seems to disregard are Ubaldini's own words in the introductions to his writings where he repeatedly pleads with the Queen to employ him one way or another. See for example the following passage from the introduction to his volume of poems, *Rime di Petrvccio Vbaldino, Cittadin Fiorentino*, once again dedicated to the Queen:

> And although for this reason the effort of doing this was neither great nor peculiar to me, nonetheless it seemed to me that part of those lines that were written by me as consolation for my soul on several occasions cannot but be a grateful gift (such as they are) to Your Majesty on this New Year's day; since through them you will be able to see, through your noble judgement, that my soul's disposition has always been the same as you could have in every moment found it if you had commanded to know it: that is, ready for various services and eager at every moment to be ordered by you and for you, and in actual fact considered by your royal judgement.[3]

The Queen had nearly always turned a deaf ear to Ubaldini's offers to oblige her as an informer and an advisor, and that is why Ubaldini had long become a true polymath: he would copy and illuminate manuscripts, edit Italian books, teach the Italian language and – what is most interesting in the present context – write books, mainly historical essays. These latter works were all compiled for two different, but related reasons: either as New Year's gifts to the Queen or as reiterated, but doomed attempts to show the Queen his goodwill to serve her and his expertise in historical and political matters. It goes without saying that these aims generated, shaped and pervaded his works and, of course,

affected the way he addressed and referred to the Queen, which is the focus of the present study.

Petruccio Ubaldini is the author of 12 works, all of them composed and/or published in England between 1564 and 1597. The first one is an unpublished, beautiful manuscript on the coronation of the emperor Charles V which is presented to Elizabeth as a New Year's gift (Ubaldini, 1564). This work launched his career as a historical writer, and as the author of the lives of six famous women in European history (Ubaldini, 1577), a much larger collection of lives of British famous women (Ubaldini, 1591), a life of Charlemagne (Ubaldini, 1581) and three different versions of the failed Spanish invasion of England in 1588 (Ubaldini, 1588b and 1589 – edited in Crinò 1988 – and Ubaldini, 1590; see Rizzi, 2008). More recent historical data, a mixture of political and social considerations, and the reflection of some personal experience characterize such works as his description of Scotland (Ubaldini, 1588a), his book on the Roman, Neapolitan and Tuscan courts (Ubaldini, 1594b), and the volume on the army of the Gran Duke of Tuscany (Ubaldini, 1597). Historical description becomes a bit more anecdotal, but nonetheless a useful source of political and moral teachings, in his books of maxims (Ubaldini, 1592) and in his selection of some significant historical events (Ubaldini, 1595). Finally, two works do not fit in any of the previous groupings: a memorandum (Ubaldini, 1594a), in which he advises the Queen on how to raise taxes on such everyday consumer goods as bread, meat and beer and on the registration of official documents, and his collection of poems (Ubaldini, 1596).

In truly Renaissance spirit, then, Ubaldini saw history as *magistra vitae* and himself as one who could divulge the teachings of history among the English Queen, the noblemen he dedicated his books to and, more generally, 'the noble, wise, and friendly reader of the English kingdom', as he wrote in his introduction to *Lo Stato delle tre corti*.[4]

Was Ubaldini successful as a would-be political advisor to the Queen? Not very much. In the dedication to Elizabeth of his 1577 MS on the lives of six famous women, he states that his aim was, 'by means of her help, to get out of the darkness of oblivion into the light of men's knowledge';[5] some twenty years later – as he writes in the introduction to his poems – 'he is worn out by the weight of years and by the hard blows of cruel fate; and above all by the vain hope of his own success, something he expected because of his long and faithful service; he is not beaten yet, but exhausted'.[6] Ubaldini puts down his failure to get a safer, better paid and more rewarding job at court to the evil workings of envy, slander and backbiting there, as described in his dedication of

his *Descrittione del Regno di Scotia* to Sir Christopher Hatton, the Earl of Leicester, and Sir Francis Walsingham (Ubaldini, 1588a, p. A3). At least a couple of times in his books Ubaldini seems to be putting the blame on the Queen herself: in the already quoted introduction to his lives of six famous women, he reminds the Queen that the year before he had presented her with a similar book, which the Queen 'accepted with smiling eyes', but he was later given no feedback at all about it;[7] and in the dedication to his English readers of his 1595 book, Petruccio writes that his success was hindered by another's or others' deaf ears, the Italian phrase[8] possibly referring to one person – in this case the Queen would be the obvious candidate – or more than one.

Whatever the case, Ubaldini did feel that the Queen might have been kinder to him as his works were not only meant to teach the English nobility but also to make England, and especially its Queen, better and more favourably known in Italy and in continental Europe at large – a motif recurring once and again in Ubaldini's introductory material to his books. For instance, in the dedication to the manuscript *Le Vite, et i Fatti di sei Donne Illustri*, Elizabeth is said to be 'very kind to foreign nations, and most willing to be honourably praised in other countries'.[9] A second example can be found in the manuscript commentary on the defeat of the Spanish Armada, dedicated to the Lord Admiral, where Ubaldini praises Lord Thomas Howard for his decision of having the whole story told in Italian, so that it may be better known to foreign nations; this will be greatly appreciated by the Queen, not only because she is said to have a particular liking for the Italian language and nation, but also because – as a note in the margin clearly states – 'Every Sovereign should try hard to gain the general benevolence and goodwill of faraway peoples that speak different languages';[10] and a few lines below Ubaldini asks his dedicatee to plead with the Queen for him since he, 'with his long service and his pen, never got tired to give evidence of the virtues of Her Majesty'.[11] A third and final example can be excerpted from a third book, *Le Vite delle Donne Illustri*: in its dedication Ubaldini tells the Queen that what he had long been doing was 'always using his pen with the only and determined aim of enhancing the Queen's honour and glory', all the more so as the Italian language, 'nowadays well known by the other nations, and by Her Majesty supported and encouraged', can help to 'perpetuate the fame of her virtues for a long time'.[12]

While the above quotations document Petruccio Ubaldini's vocal claims to act as an international spokesman for the English Queen's political and personal accomplishments, at least three of his works may

be said to refer to Elizabeth in a more subtle, indirect way. First of all, in the dedication to his 1564 New Year's gift to the Queen, Petruccio explains that he translated and summarized a Latin treatise on the coronation of Charles V, thus providing:

> this short, but particular and useful description – which, like it is necessary to Emperors, so I trust it shall not be not unwelcome to Your Majesty, born of a most prosperous King, and always keen on acting royally, for the benefit of your peoples, for which may you live a long and ever happy life, etc.[13]

One might wonder whether, by implication at least, this gift hints at a possible, and perhaps hoped-for coronation ceremony, to be held if the Queen is to get married and transfer absolute power to – or at least share it with – her husband. Whether this is wild speculation or not, one can but contrast this manuscript coronation treatise with another text that Ubaldini gave Elizabeth as a New Year's gift, that is to say *Le Vite, et i Fatti di sei Donne Illustri*, the last chapter of which deals with Venda, Queen of Poland, whose life is worth quoting almost in full:

> Venda, Queen of Poland, and a maid of singular worth and chastity, having Cracco her father and two of her brothers died, was elected, or rather confirmed, by her peoples as their Queen, in her father's good memory, and for her own virtues. Thus, when it came to give her in marriage, Ritigero Duke of the Marcomanni tried to marry her; it is not exactly known why, whether moved by her virtues, or her beauty, or to occupy her Kingdom. But she, not wanting to compromise and to put under someone else what was rightfully hers, refused that and any other marriage, as she used to say that she had rather be a Princess than a Prince's wife; so that Ritigero, his love having turned to hatred, moved against Poland with great forces; but she, marching into war against him, behaved herself so well and with so much wisdom and worth, that he was defeated in battle [...] Venda thus proving victorious, she triumphed over the enemy army in Krakov; where, after having made the appropriate sacrifices, and finally consecrating herself to her homeland's gods, she killed herself by throwing herself from a bridge into the Vistula river, so that after her fortunes she should not experience adverse fate, and that, dying as such, she should forever leave her peoples a sweet memory of herself [...] Venda could have gained herself much more honour if, after her victories, she had spent her time in well ruling her reign, such as she, with her

> great virtues, could have well done; but one excuse alone she can be granted, that she, not knowing the Christian faith, believed with her brave and magnificent deed to acquire special honour and perpetual glory.[14]

If a historical collection telling the lives and deeds of famous women, many of them of royal blood, was an obvious present for the Queen, the tragic life of Venda of Poland, virgin and warrior Queen, can hardly have passed unnoticed by Elizabeth and her courtiers; whether the life of Venda was actually meant to be a mirror for Elizabeth, it is tempting to think but more difficult to affirm with certainty. Instead, one might plausibly argue that the final, 24-page long description of Charlemagne in Ubaldini's 1581 book should not be interpreted so much as a model for Elizabeth's moral and personal behaviour but – quite the reverse – as a prefiguration of some of the Queen's best-known accomplishments: like Elizabeth, Charlemagne

> so greatly loved foreigners of some worth, whichever the nation they came from, that from the great number of them who always were at his Court, and the great gifts or benefit that they received, it seemed that the public finances and his own nation suffered. This vice has remained the same to this day, so that in every nation some hatred and envy are felt toward foreigners, though they be full of virtues and laudable qualities; however, this especially happens with those persons who are less worthy, for the vileness of their souls; which souls should not be judged against those of the Princes whom they obey, and for whom it is proper and necessary that, through those very foreigners, the praises of such Princes be spread everywhere.[15]

Further details describing Charlemagne that might suit Elizabeth as well can be gleaned from the following passages: Charlemagne

> used to eat moderately and drink even more moderately. [...] He was endowed with quite a large aquiline nose, which quality is commendable in Princes, as it denotes the greatness of their souls. [...] He was greatly eloquent in his speech, copious, careful and ornate in every subject he addressed, and so ready that, though taken unaware, he was able to make orations in the battlefield and elsewhere. He also used the Latin and German tongues. He furthermore learnt Greek, but understood it more than he could speak it.[16]

Although Petruccio Ubaldini never succeeded in becoming one of the English Queen's informers and advisors on international affairs, he did play an active role as a spokesman of Elizabeth's character abroad. In fact, apart from the above-mentioned works, Ubaldini is the author of a number of letters and a *Relatione* that were addressed to and written for Italian politicians and statesmen in order to update them on what had been happening in Britain.

In December 1575 Ubaldini wrote a letter to Francesco, Gran Duke of Tuscany, and son of Cosimo I de' Medici, expressing his wish to become an informer on things English for him. Though the Gran Duke was not particularly keen on employing Ubaldini, who was at the same time a servant of Queen Elizabeth, he made use of him in an indirect way: Ubaldini would send his messages to Lorenzo Guicciardini, a distant relative of his, who worked as a secretary to the Gran Duke and a sort of semi-official agent of the English government in Florence. Let it be remembered that religious and political differences had stifled official contacts between Britain and Italy: Queen Elizabeth had been excommunicated by Pope Pius V in February 1569 (the excommunication being confirmed by successive Popes in three other bulls), and England's conflict with the papacy, especially with Gregory XIII, would become even more bitter with the defeat of the Spanish Armada.

Among the letters Ubaldini sent Guicciardini in the period 1579–94 (see Crinò, 1969), two are worth mentioning. The first one, dated 30 July 1579, reports the recent accident in which a young man heedlessly discharged a gun across the Thames while the Queen was on a boat near the opposite bank and, as a result, one of the Queen's oarsmen was hurt. This dangerous event, Ubaldini writes to his Italian correspondent, 'terrified the other people on the boat more than the Queen, who not only showed honourable coolness, and piety towards the wounded man, but later was so clement as to forgive the culprit, who deserved being hanged'; and this shows 'the benign nature of Her Majesty'.[17]

Although many letters provide brief comments on the Queen's health and mood – she is always very well and happy in Ubaldini's reports – the letter dated 27 October 1593 provides a more detailed picture:

> The Queen is well, very well I say, and is at Windsor Castle now [...] And, to tell the truth, by her own inclination, she has led such a self-disciplined life that no woman was known to be less prone to illnesses than she is; she lives on such a simple diet, with no superfluous mixing of foods; she hardly drinks wine, just a little and with water in it, and small ale; and above all she is governed by the necessities of

> natural appetite, and not by the superstition of mealtimes. She was born in September 1533, and that's it.[18]

In Ubaldini's view, then, the English Queen is physically and morally sound. A more detailed description of Queen Elizabeth – again meant for an Italian readership – is to be found in the so-called *Relatione delle cose del Regno d'Inghilterra*, which can also be referred to as Ubaldini's account of England. This report is in the line of other, preceding texts, but in Francesca Bugliani's opinion it 'is the most original description of England written by an Italian during the sixteenth century'; it is 'richer in scope and detail, less biassed politically and less given to stereotypes' than preceding reports; and 'it is better rounded in historical detail, more original in its description of English customs and less critical of the religious and political policies taken by the crown' (Bugliani, 1994, p. 179). The text survives in a handful of manuscripts,[19] none of them ever published until a few decades ago: the account was first compiled in 1551 for the use of the government of Venice, where Ubaldini was about to go and work; this was heavily revised 25 years later, in a manuscript dated 1576, now held in Lucca, and therefore probably meant for the Tuscan court; a further version, with minor changes, is to be found in a manuscript dated 1583; finally, an undated manuscript of the early seventeenth century contains an abbreviated version of the Lucca 1576 text, probably written after Queen Elizabeth's death, and almost certainly not by Ubaldini. This account of England, therefore, spans the whole of Petruccio's life as a historical and political writer and was reworked more than once as the occasion demanded or as his perception of England and English affairs came to change (Bugliani, 1991, 1992, 1994, 1995).

As far as Elizabeth is concerned, she is obviously very briefly mentioned in the 1551 text, in the passage where Ubaldini is dealing with Anne Boleyn: 'Elizabeth was born of this second wife; she is still unmarried, and is not less learned, good-looking and shrewd than the first'.[20] Instead, the following version of Ubaldini's *Relatione* – which is, generally speaking, more favourably disposed to Elizabethan England – provides a long, detailed portrait of the Queen:

> In the art of showing and persuading she is highly skilled, and since her knowledge of history is not little, and knows well the most used foreign languages, such as Italian and French, and Latin and Greek, she also uses a wonderful art with every man whom she wants to make use of, and especially with those people who can spread the

word of her honourable worth abroad, and in insinuating with words in her servants great hopes of rewards no other Princess seems to be able to equal her, although by nature she proves quite slow in doing this, so that by many she is deemed generally reluctant and tight-fisted, because only some of those closest to her and who can deal with her nature have earned not little by being patient; but with the foreign personalities sent by Princes she has always proved magnificent and munificent, as suits her dignity and royal condition. She especially delights in music, so that she is almost a mistress in every kind of it; and by giving musicians good provisions and gifts, she has gathered so many around her, of every nation and type, that they cost her quite a lot of money, such as no other Christian Prince that we know of has perhaps ever spent. Anyway she plays various instruments and sings, and is very keen on every sort of entertainment. As for the management of private things such as favours of various kinds, it takes her very long, as she always gives with her words sure hopes to the petitioners that they will obtain what they desire, but in fact without constant reminders and complacent friends and protectors one can hardly obtain anything which she doubts might cost her something from her purse, by this meaning only those who cannot afford to buy the souls of the men and women who find favour at the Court, and anyway these often waste time and what they have in these practices, from which either they depart, worn-out, or of which they enjoy the fruit that they with difficulty have dearly bought with time and money. She revels in exquisite clothing and in new inventions, as well as in seeing the rest of her court do the same; hence today this court spends incredible sums in this sort of things, superfluous to those who use them, and for this reason those who seem rich in their clothing lack many other things, and most men and women of this court are either bad payers or live on usury, except for those people who can make use of the great favour they enjoy with those who need them. She is very moderate and restrained with her food and, though her complexion is delicate, she is nonetheless very healthy and well built, thanks to her exercise and diet; and as regards religion she is also moderate, not strict with her opponents, but rather benign and considerate, and she is doubtlessly a woman suited for every deed, and this is what can be said about her nature through the pen. By which we can conclude that between her sister Mary and her there was no little emulation of virtue; but so very inclined her sister always was to marrying, also procuring marriage for the women in her royal service, as she is alien to getting married,

> which she not only does not seek for herself, as would be suitable, but neither she does for the other women. Mary was very praised for her liberality, and her amiable favour and royal gravity. This one is praised for her fair parsimony, and for her more than womanly shrewdness, and is no less laudable for her gracefulness, as she uses copious grateful words in any occasion and, when the moment calls for it, her nature totally changed, she acts no less gravely and seriously than her rank requires. Letting herself in fact be guided in government, like Mary, though differently, since Mary always wanted to be advised by men of Church, while this one never wanted to have any in her council. Thus Mary left in everyone a distinguished memory of herself, and for Elizabeth's long life everyone in this kingdom, including any foreigner living in it, must pray, and not without reason in many aspects.[21]

This is certainly a most interesting verbal portrait of Queen Elizabeth, not conventionally eulogistic but full of live firsthand details and interesting insights: her physical and outward appearance, her many talents, her behaviour as a woman and as a sovereign, her ideas – all come out very vividly in Ubaldini's account.

By way of conclusion, then, it can be argued that, although Petruccio did not fulfil his lifelong ambition to become the Italian spokesman for Elizabeth I, he did make the English queen better known in Italy through his writings; and it may also be added that the quatrain Ubaldini appended to his small volume of poems should not be simply dismissed as a rhetorical commonplace farewell to his readers, but it should be read as the true representation of his literary and personal achievement:

> If some recreation to those who like reading
> Is given, this has always been my desire:
> So as to avoid vile idleness and dark oblivion,
> And leave behind me some genuine study.[22]

On a more general, less poetic note, it can be said that Petruccio Ubaldini was one of a comparatively large number of Italians living in Tudor England and exerting some sort of influence on the political, social, cultural and intellectual relations between the two countries during the sixteenth and earlier seventeenth centuries. These relations could take very different forms: purely literary influences, English translations of Italian books, the presence of Italian books in English libraries, the

teaching of the Italian language in England, the experience of English travellers in Italy and of Italian expatriates in England (Rossi, 1989; Lawrence, 2005; Wyatt, 2005) – in short, books and men were the channels by which the ideal and the real of Italian Renaissance reached the English shores. Both books and men served the aims of the English ruling classes, that is to say to utilize the then superior culture of Italy to bring England into the European context. In this perspective the role played by a comparatively obscure figure such as Petruccio Ubaldini, though hardly acknowledged at the time, cannot be disregarded, and his works and life experiences may rightly be said to contribute a few brushstrokes to the composite picture of Queen Elizabeth painted by her contemporaries, inside and outside her great kingdom.

Notes

1. Here I refer to Ubaldini, 1597, pp. Aij–Aiij. Most data on Petruccio's life come from the introductions to some of his works: for further details, see Bugliani, 1994, p. 176, n. 5.
2. He would never succeed in becoming the official representative of the Gran Dukes of Tuscany at Elizabeth's court.
3. 'Et ancor, che per questa ragione, la fatica di cio fare, à me non sia stata, nè graue, nè curiosa; m'è parso non dimeno, ch'vna parte di quei versi, ch'à consolation dell'animo mio in piu volte, & per diuersi oggetti furon da me scritti: non sieno per esser dono se non grato (quali essi si sieno) alla Maestà vostra questo principio d'anno, percioche per essi la potrà col suo nobil giudicio conoscer, che la disposition dell'animo mio è stata sempre tale quale lei haurebbe potuta ad hora ad'hora ritrouarla comandandola: cio è atta à diuersi seruigi, & desiderosa ad ogn'hora d'esser da lei, & per lei comandata. & effettuamente dal suo proprio Real giudicio considerata' (Ubaldini, 1596, unnumbered page).
4. 'nobile, et prvdente, et amichevol lettore della real natione inghilese' (Ubaldini, 1594b, p. Aij).
5. 'ottener per il mezo di lei di poter uscire dalle tenebre dell'obliuione alla luce de' gli huomini' (Ubaldini, 1577, f.2r).
6. 'stracco dal peso de gli anni, & da i colpi della nemica fortuna: Et sopra tutto dalla vana speranza d'vn certo meco medesimo gia imaginatomi felice successo delle mie cose proprie per la lunga, & fedel seruitù mia, non pur battuto, ma del tutto homai fatto languido' (Ubaldini, 1596, unnumbered page).
7. 'accettò con allegro ciglio; quel, che di poi gnene sia parso, non ho conosciuto' (Ubaldini, 1577, f.2r).
8. 'altrui sorde orecchie' (Ubaldini, 1595, p. A2).
9. 'cortesissima alle straniere nationi, et desiderosissima d'honorata lode nell'altrui contrade' (Ubaldini, 1577, f.2r).

10. 'Ogni Principe si deve studiar di guadagnarsi la benevolenza generale delle genti ancora lontane e di lingua diversa' (Ubaldini, 1588b, f.2r).
11. 'con la lunga servitù et con la penna non mi sono già mai stancato di rimostrare le virtù della Maestà Sua' (Ubaldini, 1588b, f.2v).
12. 'essercitar la penna sempre nondimeno con vn fermo scopo dell'honore, et della gloria di lei [...] dall'altre nationi hora mai curiosamente conosciuta, et piu dalla M.ta Vostra qui sostenuta, et fauorita [...] perpetuare à lungo la fama delle sue virtù' (Ubaldini, 1591, unnumbered pages).
13. 'questa breue, ma particolare, e util descrittione; la quale, come è necessaria à gli Imperadori, cosi confido non douerrà esser discara alla M.a V.ra nata di Re Felicissimo, e per operar sempre cose realissime, à benefitio de i suoi popoli, a i quali ella uiua lunga uita, e sempre felice &c.' (Ubaldini, 1564, f.2r).
14. 'Venda Regina di Pollonia uergine di singular ualore, et castità, essendogli morto Cracco suo padre, et due fratelli, fu da i populi per la buona memoria del padre, et per le uirtù sue proprie eletta, ò uero confermata lor Regina; onde trattandosi di maritarla: Ritigero Duca de i Marcomanni cercò d' hauerla per moglie; non si sa bene se mosso, ò per le sue uirtù, ò per la sua bellezza, ò per occupare il suo Regno. Ma lei non uolendo mettere in compromesso, et in arbitrio d'altri quel, ch'era suo del certo, rifiutò quel mariaggio, et ogni altro, usando di dire, che desideraua piu presto esser Principessa, che moglie di Principe; la onde Ritigero conuertito l'amore in odio con forze molto grandi assaltò la Pollonia; contra il quale uenendo ella in persona à giornata si portò cosi bene, et con tanta prudenza, et ualore, che ei fu rotto in campagna [...] Rimanendo adunque Venda uittoriosa, trionfò in Craccouia dell'essercito nemico; Doue fatti prima i conuenienti sagrificij; all'ultimo uotando se medesima à gli Dei della sua patria si ammazzò precipitandosi dal ponte nel fiume Vistula, accioche doppo le sue felicità, la non hauesse à prouar la fortuna contraria, et accioche morendo in tale stato, ella lasciasse ai suoi populi per sempre dolce memoria di se stessa [...] Harebbe potuto Venda conseguir piu honorate lodi, se doppo le sue uittorie, ella hauesse speso il suo tempo in gouernare bene il suo Regno, cosi come per la sua molta uirtù l'harebbe saputo fare; Ma una scusa sola puo saluarla, che non conoscendo ella la fede Christiana, si credette con quell'atto appresso di lei magnifico, et forte, acquistarsi un singular honor, et una perpetua gloria' (Ubaldini, 1577, ff.13v–15v).
15. 'Amò grandemente i forestieri di qualche valore, & di qualunque natione e' si fussero in modo, che per il gran numero, che sempre ne seguitaua la Corte, & per i gran doni, ò profitti, che ne riceueuano pareua, che 'l fisco ne patisse, & che la sua propia natione se ne dolesse; Come anco fino ad hora egli è proprio vitio, che appresso d'ogni natione si porti vn certo odio, & inuidia à i forestieri, benche e' sieno ornati di virtù, & di meriti lodeuoli; ma cio gli auuien loro per il piu da quelle persone, che men vagliono per la bassezza de gli animi loro; i quali non s'hanno punto da misurar con quei de i Principi, à i quali s'appartiene, & è necessariò, che per il mezo de gli stessi forestieri si sparghino honoratamente le lodi loro per tutto' (Ubaldini, 1581, p. 112).
16. 'Era parco nel suo mangiare, & nel bere parcissimo [...] Di naso aquilino al quanto grande, il che è lodato ne i Principi, percioche dinota magnificenza d'animo [...] Ei fu nel suo parlar eloquentissimo, copioso, accorto, & ornato

in qualunque suggetto, che gli venisse alle mani; & tanto pronto, che alla sprouista fece alcune orationi necessarie in campo, & altroue. Vsò nondimeno la lingua Latina, & la Germana. Imparò la Greca ancora, ma piu l'intese, che' la potesse esprimere' (Ubaldini, 1581, pp. 113–18).

17. 'Il caso come nuovo e strano diede più terrore ad altri che non a lei, la quale non solamente all'hora mostrò honorata costanza per se stessa, et pietà verso quel povero ferito; ma di poi ha usata clemenza singular nel perdonar al reo mentre ch'ei doveva esser tirato sulla forca [. . .] benigna natura di Sua Maestà' (Crinò, 1969, p. 484).
18. 'La Regina sta bene, dico benissimo, si ritrova a Windesora [. . .] Et per dire il vero la persona sua ha per inclination propria tenuta tal vita temperata che non fu mai conosciuta donna manco suggetta alle infermità di quello che lei è, vivendo con tal dieta semplice senza miscugli superflui di cibo et non bevendo vino se non poco et bene adacquato et ala piccola, et soprattutto governandosi con la necessità del naturale appetito et non con la superstition dell'ore. Nacque nel '33 di settembre, et basta' (Crinò, 1969, pp. 543–4).
19. That is the reason why the *Relatione* is not listed among the manuscript sources appended to the present article, but only indirectly referred to in the references to its modern editions, that is to say Pellegrini, 1967, Crinò, 1979, and Bugliani, 1994.
20. King Henry's first daughter, Mary, is here referred to. 'Di questa seconda Moglie nacque Elizabeth, ancora vergine, nè manco dotta, bella et accorta, che la prima' (Pellegrini, 1967, p. 74).
21. 'Ella nell'arti del dimostrar', e del persuadere è artificiosissima, et poichè ella non ha piccola cognitione dell'historie, et possede bene le lingue forestiere più usate, come la Italiana, et la franzese, et ancora la latina e la greca: usa anche un'arte mirabile con ogni huomo di chi la si voglia servire per prevedersene e principalmente con quelle persone che gli possono dar' fuori fama honorata del suo valore, et nell'insinuare ai suoi servitori con le parole speranza grande di ricompense nessun altra Principessa par che la possa pareggiare, quantunque per natura nell'effettuarlo si mostri alquanto lenta, si che da molti l'è stata stimata tenace et stretta nel generale, perchè solamente alcuni più propinqui et che sanno governarsi con la sua natura hanno guadagnato non poco con la loro pazienza, Ma con i personaggi forestieri mandati da Principi è sempre riuscita splendida et magnanima come alla sua dignità et Stato Reale s'è convenuto. Si diletta della musica sopratutto, si che n'è di tutte le sorti quasi che Maestra, intanto che donando ai musici buone provisioni et doni, n'ha tanto numero raccolti di ogni nassione e sorte, che gli costano non piccol somma di denari, quali nessun altro Principe di Cristianità per quanto noi conosciamo, forse non ha mai speso, Però suona ella in diversi strumenti et canta, et al trattenimento di tutte le sorte di essa è attissima. Quanto alla speditione delle cose private come sono gratie di diverse sorti ella è lunga molto porgendo sempre con le parole speranza certa ai supplicanti di dover ottenere le cose desiderate, ma in effeto sensa assidui riccordi et accordati Amici et protettori difficilmente si può ottener' cos'alcuna nella quale ella possa dubitare che gli habbia da costare alcuna cosa della sua borsa, intendendo questo solo per quei che non hanno il modo di comprar gli Animi delli huomini, et delle donne favorite in Corte, et però questi tali spesso consumano il tempo et quel che hanno dietro, a così fatte pratiche, dalla quali o si

partono stracchi o se pure ottengono con fatica gustano il frutto che con difficultà et caro hanno comprato col tempo e con li denari. Dilettasi di vestire leggiadramente et di nuove inventioni, et così di vedere il resto della corte, et di qui nasce che oggi questa corte spende straordinariamente in così fatte cose ancora superflue a chi l'usa, et per questo quello che di ricchezza che apparisce nel vestir' mancando in molte altre cose ha causato che la maggior parte degli huomini et donne di Corte ò pagano male ò vivono sopra l'usura, riservate quelle persone che si sanno prevaler del favor grande ch'hanno con quei che hanno bisogno di loro. Nel vitto è modesta molto et temperata et però benché di complissione dilicata, è non di meno molto sana et ben disposta prevalendosi dell'esercitio et della dieta; et nella religione se la passa quietamente, non severa verso gli Aversarij, ma piutosto benigna et considerata, et è sensa dubio Donna atta ad'ogni attione, et questo è quanto per corso di penne si può dire della natura sua, per il che si può concludere che fra Maria sua sorella et lei, non fosse poca emulatione di virtù; Ma quella com'hebbe l'Animo dispostissimo à maritarsi, così procurò sempre con ogni diligenza mariaggio per le sue donne del servitio Reale, loche questa aliena dal maritar' se medesima, non solo non procura, come par' che converrebbe, ansi mostra non si curar punto che l'altre si maritino. Maria di liberalità fu molto lodata, et di gratia amabile et di gravità Reale. Questa per discreta parsimonia, et per accortezza più che donnesca, et per leggiadria non è meno lodevole mescolando in ogni proposito larghezza di parole grate, et quando il tempo lo ricerca, del tutto mutata natura, si mostra non men grave et pesata di quello che ricerca il suo grado. Lasciandosi in effeto nel governo reggere come Maria benchè diversamente, per che quella da huomini di Chiesa si diletto sempre di esser co'sigliata questa nessuno ne ha mai voluto havere in consiglio. Così Maria lasciò in tutti una singular memoria di sé, et per la lunga vita di Elizabetta ciascuno di questo regno, et forestieri che ci habitano debbeno pregare et non sensa ragione per molti rispetti' (from the Lucca 1576 manuscript, ff.29r–31r, quoted in Bugliani, 1994, pp. 195–6).

22. 'S'alcun diporto à chi di legger piace / Si lascia, ciò fu sempre il mio desio: / Per fuggir il vile otio, e'l cieco oblio: / E per lasciar di me studio verace' (Ubaldini, 1596, unnumbered page).

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11

Never a Merry World: the Rhetoric of Nostalgia in Elizabethan England

Kristine Johanson

'We shall never have a mery world til the old king be dead', declares Sir John Oldcastle in *The famous victories of Henry the fifth* (*Famous victories*, 1598, sig.Cv).[1] Responding to Prince Henry's own assertion that 'if the old king my father were dead, we would be all kings', Oldcastle's remarks provide a useful point of departure for this essay on Elizabethan nostalgia, Reformation rhetoric, and Shakespeare's *The First Part of the Contention* (Cr).[2] Falstaff's archetype suggests that the prince's rule is predicated not on the example or idea of the past; rather, he lampoons the present by imagining it *as past* and envisions a future defined by its disconnection from that past. That future-oriented 'mery world', when read together with Katherine Eggert's assertion that nostalgia in Shakespeare's *Henry V* performs anxieties about female rule and the succession, suggests that Elizabethan playwrights (and their audiences) eagerly anticipated a Jacobean future, a future cut off from the tumultuous Tudor past (Eggert, 1994, p. 524). That reading intimates superficially what I will establish below: on the Elizabethan stage, nostalgia functioned as a potent, destabilizing political discourse.

Using as its rhetorical touchstone the proverb 'it was never a merry world since…', my analysis explores the historical, religious, and dramatic contexts of a rhetoric of nostalgia. Such examination demonstrates how this rhetoric was developed prior to its use on the early modern stage and how that use alters the idea of nostalgia in Elizabethan drama. Constructions of the idealized past in the early 1590s highlight not only their function as dramatic political discourse, but the constructedness of those pasts as well; moreover, they reveal themselves to be grounded in proverbial language that is appropriated by anti-Catholic writers of the later Reformation.

Critics write easily of 'nostalgia' in early modern England, but the term itself did not exist until the late seventeenth century. The Swiss

doctor Johannes Hofer created the word in 1688, introducing it in his *Dissertatio Medica de Nostalgia, ober Heimweh* to describe a mental and physiological disease Swiss soldiers suffered in their military service; his dissertation also draws on civilian evidence and concludes that nostalgia could affect anyone (Hofer, 1934, pp. 376–91, 384). Hofer joined the Greek 'nostos' (to return home) and 'algos' (pain, or sorrow) to establish the word's connection to a longing to return 'home' (*OED*). The *OED* charts the word's evolution from a strictly medical condition to the quasi-pejorative meaning behind the more modern understanding of the term: a 'sentimental longing *for* or regretful memory of a period of the past, esp[ecially] one in an individual's own lifetime; (also) sentimental imagining or evocation of a period of the past'. Introducing 'nostalgia' under medical inquiry meant that in succeeding decades it represented not the emotional yearning with which modern society has come to associate it, but rather a very serious disease – one which, at the height of its fear, discouraged eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europeans from leaving their countries (Starobinski, 1966, pp. 86–8).

However, the word's development and history do not prove that it was unknown before 1688: its absence simply suggests that the word 'nostalgia' was not used and that it was not understood as a medical condition. As Anne Barton has argued, while the term was absent from Tudor and Stuart England, 'the emotion [nostalgia] designated certainly [was present]' (1984, p. 305). Linda Charnes asserts that 'any medieval and early modern epic illustrates' nostalgia's certain existence prior to its medical definition and our modern sentimentalizing; her use of 'epic' suggests that tragic narratives of war and nations provide a 'sure' source of nostalgia (2007, pt.15). Indeed, the longing for an idealized past – partly a consequence of the European Renaissance's intellectual and cultural engagement with antiquity – was a real and ubiquitous sentiment in early modern England.

Where the disease of 'nostalgia' remains rooted to physical reality, its early-modern counterpart distinguishes itself in its absolute need for a fantasy of an unknown past to determine its successful invocation. The nostalgia that forms part of political rhetoric in sixteenth-century drama and religious polemic literature indeed *anticipates* that imaginary element of the disease because it formulates 'nostalgia' as a rhetoric grounded almost entirely in the imaginary. Nostalgia, as it is evoked by the *topoi* of a 'merry world' and a 'golden age', results from individual and collective fantasies about unknown pasts, pasts invoked as a positive comparison to current times. On the English Renaissance stage, that comparison becomes a means of expressing political discontent. While

in Reformation literature an idealized past represents a locus of mockery, in drama it is used ambivalently to express both political discontent and opportunity. Indeed, nostalgia is an abstract dis-ease long before it becomes a concrete medical affliction. The combination of a longing for the past with the belief that the past can be reclaimed and recreated in the present further characterize early modern nostalgia, defining the use of a rhetoric of nostalgia in early modern history plays. Embedded within the idealizing fantasy is an elision of history, a degree of false memory which enables the romanticization of various pasts; that elision provides an element of generic self-reflection in the Elizabethan history play.

1. 'Cause alone' of the golden age

Elizabeth herself represented that fantasy of the idealized past in her aesthetic fashioning as Astraea, virgin goddess of justice whose return and presence signals the return of the golden age. While knowledge of two of the foundational texts of the myth of the golden age – Virgil's fourth eclogue and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* – was 'an essential pre-requisite for understanding the discourse of the Elizabethan elite', this is not to suggest that the myth itself and its political implications were unintelligible to the masses (Mack, 2002, p. 12). Indeed, since her coronation procession Elizabeth had been publicly associated with Astraea and the idea that she represented the hope of a new, peaceful, gilded age. Astraea was the last of the immortals to abandon the 'blood-soaked earth' with the coming of the iron age (Levin, 1969, p. 22; Yates, 1947, 1975). Inheriting the throne as the harbinger of 'the third major religious transformation in a dozen years', Elizabeth was imagined in her entry procession through London as a force of peace after the turbulence and violence of the preceding decades since Henry VIII's break from Rome, the dissolution of the monasteries, and the religious violence that marked the reigns of Edward and Mary (Duffy, 2005, p. 564). Richard Mulcaster, the influential schoolmaster and scholar, described how, progressing through London, the new Queen 'implanted a wonderful hope in [her subjects] touching her worthy government in the rest of her reign' (2004, p. 76). Mulcaster's account also cites a child's welcome oration to Elizabeth; the child, representing the whole of London, declared, 'Behold with how rich hope she [London] leadeth thee to thy crown' (2004, p. 76). The child furthermore voiced the hope of peace Elizabeth symbolizes: 'now that jar shall stint, and quietness increase, / We trust, O noble Queen, thou will be cause alone' (Mulcaster, 2004, p. 80). In these

public acts, hope signals a recognition of the past's potential to return: Elizabeth's procession presents a semiotics of *renovatio*.

According to Hester Lees-Jeffries, the idea of Elizabeth as 'cause alone' for the peace of the realm is metaphorically figured in her procession, *Veritas Temporis Filia*, through the staging of pageants at fountains and conduits throughout the procession's path. During the pageant Elizabeth carried an English Bible, and Lees-Jeffries argues that in the procession, the book 'was [...] the metaphorical fountain that would restore the barren commonwealth and sustain the fertile, through the agency of the rightful and godly prince' (2007, p. 79). Moreover, Elizabeth's *English* Bible signified a return to the values of the Church fathers through a purification of the text and a return to the perfect religious past, ideas that drove the Reformation, the hopes of which were embodied in England's Protestant Queen. Lees-Jeffries' conclusion, that Elizabeth would be the fountain from which the well-being of her commonwealth would spring, parallels the child's suggestion of Elizabeth as 'cause alone' (Lees-Jeffries, 2007, p. 79). So too this metaphor is evocative of the golden age and 'merry world' *topoi* in that these metaphors rely on the notion of an untainted, pure source from which the ideal republic, the ideal government, the ideal England can arise and be created for this time and for these people.

Thirty years later that hope may have eroded, but the association between Elizabeth, Astraea and the golden age was still extant and indeed of interest to the playwrights of the burgeoning public theatres. Robert Greene included Astraea briefly in his *A Maidens Dreame upon the Death of the Right Honorable Sir Christopher Hatton* (1591), in which the goddess comforts the narrator over the loss of the Lord Chancellor at the time of his death (Greene, 1591, sigs.C3r–C3v). In the same year, George Peele made the connection between the Queen and Astraea more explicit in his *Descensus astraeae*: 'Astraea [...] tendes her flocke / With watchfull eyes, and keep this fount in peace' (Peele, 1591, sig.A2r). She does not permit 'blind superstitious ignorance, / [to] Corrupt so pure a spring', and Peele rejoices, 'O happie times / That do beget such calme and quiet daies', concluding:

> Long may she lie, long may she governe us
> In peace triumphant [...]
> Our faire Astraea, our Pandora faire,
> Our faire Eliza.
>
> (sig.A2v)

Peele employs the same image of the fount and 'pure spring' that Lees-Jeffries associates with civic authority in the location of pageants in *Veritas Temporis Filia* and which the child's oration suggests in his description of Elizabeth as 'cause alone'. Peele's rhetoric is decidedly celebratory as he lauds the present in these 'happie times', invoking the image of the returned golden age: the Astraea he describes has not abandoned the earth, but rather signalled the arrival of a new age as she has returned to govern the present. Greene's and Peele's verses suggest a literary and political interest in maintaining the relationship between Elizabeth and the return of the idealized past that wasn't so perfectly maintained on the contemporary stage.

2. *Paroemia* and the rhetoric of Reformation

The Contention uses the longing for a past world to establish the intellectual and political context in which Jack Cade's rhetoric of a communist, work-free, sexually liberated utopia, a Land of Cockaigne, can succeed.[3] To form that imaginative world, *The Contention* introduces *paroemia* as a *topos* of nostalgia in the play's latter half. *Paroemia* is the rhetorical use of a proverb; according to Henry Peacham, it must be both 'a sentence in every mans mouth' as well as 'pretty [...] witty, that is to say: that it may be decearned, by some note and marke from common speeche, and also commended by antiquity, and learning' (Peacham, 1577, sig.Diiv). The use of the 'merry world' adage appeals to the *sensus communis* of the audience, who would have been familiar with a wide body of proverbs at this particular time, and indeed with variants of 'It never was a merry world since...' more generally. Furthermore, its use suggests a continuum for a rhetoric of nostalgia formulated earlier in the play, when Gloucester reflects on the sacrifices Henry V and his fellow nobles made for England.[4] An examination of this proverb's context and its employment as a rhetorical tool in early modern England reveals the cultural weight of this aphorism within the play. The 'merry world' maxim possesses its own totalizing narrative, a narrative circulated in the religious debates of the mid-to-late sixteenth century. Its use in *The Contention* commences a series of explicit alternative futures: that projected by the rebels, the Cockaignian idyll lauded by Cade, and finally the harmonious England that Clifford envisions, ironically, as a consequence of war.

Scholars across disciplines agree upon the significance of proverbs in the sixteenth century as well as upon the source of that significance: Erasmus's *Adagia* (Barker, 2001; Obelkevich, 1997, pp. 43–72; Boggs,

1938, pp. 1, 7). His 1508 *Adagiorum chiliades* importantly included Latin translations of Erasmus's Greek text; Richard Taverner's 1539 English translation of the work guaranteed that the *Adages* would 'reach more than the specialist reader' (Barker, 2001, pp. xv, xiv). Indeed, by some counts Shakespeare used over 4,600 proverbs in his plays (Obelkevich, 1997, p. 56). Perhaps the appeal of aphorisms lay in their collective, anonymous nature, their implied malleability, for 'Proverbs put the collective before the individual, the recurrent and stereotyped before the unique, external rules before self-determination, common sense before the individual vision' (Obelkevich, 1997, p. 65; Barker, 2001, p. xxvi). Through their collective nature, their seeking out of what is commonly understood, proverbs represent a medium to express nostalgia. Morris Palmer Tilley observes this collective element in proverbial sayings, as authors commonly introduced them into their works with 'We say…' and 'As we say…' (Tilley, 1950, p. v). Such phrasing makes explicit what the proverb itself possesses implicitly: an appeal to a common idea, a common belief. Moreover, as 'the small change of conversation', adages are an intellectual and cultural education, Tilley argues, a window into a specific society and time (Tilley, 1950, pp. vii, viii). By invoking a source of shared ideas and a rhetoric which distils larger problems and themes into a forthright saying, proverbs both participate in the creation of a nostalgic tone as well as represent what nostalgia is appealing to: a shared idea, a shared *ideal*.

The 'merry world' construction, with its open-ended 'since', allowed for a diverse group of authors to appropriate the saying for religious, political, and dramatic purposes. In each instance, however, the constant is the nostalgic phrasing that invokes a previous time: it was never a merry world or England *since*. For several authors, this was 'since' the Catholics stubbornly clung to their papism. Keith Thomas has demonstrated how post-Reformation Catholics appropriated idealized versions of a medieval world to highlight the failures of the present, and their Protestant counterparts gleefully indulged in mocking these arguments and underlining the fallacies in them (Thomas, 1983, pp. 11–13). 'Gracious Menewe', a pseudonym for the well-known clergyman Thomas Becon, wrote *A plaine subversyon*, a dialogue between an apprentice and a priest, to argue the fallacy of the Catholic practice of confession.[5] Reacting to the apprentice's admonitions against the practice, the Priest laments that a 'prentyse' should presume to understand the Gospel as a religious man does: 'It was never mery with us, sythens such ionge boyes presumed to reade the scriptures' (Menewe, 1555, sig.Ee.vr). Becon's Marian dialogue looks ahead to a time when Foxe's *Actes and*

Monuments could use similar proverbial rhetoric to reflect the state support of Protestantism. In 'The Notable Historie of William Hunter Martyr', Foxe's account mirrors Becon's 'dialogue': William, a young 'pre[n]tise in London in the first yeare of Queene Marie', was asked to leave his master because he had refused to take communion (Foxe, 1583, II: f.1536).[6] Hunter returned to his father's house and, reading the Bible in chapel one day, was confronted by Father Atwell. Outraged by Hunter, Atwell demanded 'what medlest thou with the Bible? Knowest thou what thou readest, and canst thou expound the Scriptures?', retorting to William's defence: 'it was never mery since the Bible came abroad in English' (Foxe, 1583, II: f.1536). Atwell uses the proverb to express longing for that time not when reading in the vernacular was illegal, but further back to when the Bible was inaccessible as a whole in English.

Further examples of the 'merry world' proverb demonstrate its seeming ubiquity amongst Elizabethan Protestant writers interested in mocking their Catholic counterparts. The Puritan activist John Fielde's anti-Catholic tract, *A caveat for Parsons Howlet*, employs the proverb as the saying of a disgruntled Catholic against the current state of England's religious affairs. Fielde's rhetoric building up to his invocation of a 'merry world' is the same kind of totalizing, nostalgic rhetoric present in *The Contention*. Describing at length Catholic actions and character, he writes:

> They will whisper from place to place, and from one to another upon their ale-bench, what dayes are these, what wickednesse is in the world [...] O the golden world is gone, when we had 24 egges for a peny, when we mighte goe to this religious house and that, and have good chere and our bellies ful [...] They say the Masse is naught, but I can not tell, then we had a mery world, and all things plenty [...] and as for mens servants [...] Nowe they are so bookishe, become so wise and learned, that they wil meddle with the scriptures. It was never mery world since there was so muche talke of the scripture, since every cobler and Tinker durst meddle with it, and a byble must stande in euery window. (Fielde, 1581, ff.64–5).

Marginally marking this passage as 'the common speech of papists', Fielde provides one further example of associating Catholic speech with the idea of an idealized England in which the commons remained in religious ignorance (1581, f.65). Significantly, however, Fielde places his use of the proverb in a rhetorical context: he commences his

report by using language closely identified with the nostalgic rhetoric evident on the English stage not even ten years later. Through his sarcastic and derogatory tone, Fielde associates nostalgia with the illicit, with the ignorant, with the papists. His rhetoric derides the impulse to imagine an ideal world similar to that proposed by Jack Cade. Furthermore, it aligns nostalgic rhetoric against the state. Having employed the phrase 'these days', invoked the image of the 'golden world', *and* ended with the use of the 'merry world' proverb, Fielde continues his report, 'Wel, the Queene cannot live alwaies, and when our day commeth, we will be even with them' (1581, f.65). Fielde's ventriloquizing rhetoric suggests that the lamented 'golden world' can be reclaimed when the Queen dies; his writing characterizes Catholics as dangerous through both their longing for the past and their projection of that past into the future: a future without a Protestant Queen.

Becon, Foxe, and Fielde are each ventriloquists in their method of voicing Catholic opposition to Protestant practice. Yet, in their use of the 'merry world' proverb, they carefully avoid the dilemma which Annabel Patterson observes ventriloquist-authors faced: 'The form of the dilemma [...] is that the ventriloquist must himself utter, in order to refute them, ethical and pathetic claims whose force may linger beyond his own powers of persuasion' (Patterson, 1989, p. 42). In using a succinct proverb to voice Catholic opinion, the writers posed one criticism, rather than multiple claims; notably, it was an anti-populist one.

Inevitably, these arguments worked their way into drama. Wever's moralizing interlude *Lusty Juventus* represents not only a co-optation and inversion of a sub-genre of the Catholic morality play, but furthermore appropriates previously reported Catholic dialogue for Protestant didactic purposes. As Pamela King asserts, *Lusty Juventus* exemplifies how the genre of early Reformation interlude presented a negation of the typical pattern in 'Prodigal Son' plays; she argues, 'When [...] the Reformation rendered the values of elders synonymous with those of the corrupt old faith, the youthful protagonist [of an interlude] might be encouraged by characters representing the voice of Reformation to cast aside the values of his elders in order to conform to a new orthodoxy' (King, 1993, pp. 87–8). Wever effects a representation of this project when he ironically uses Hypocrisie to voice his nostalgia:

> I may say to you secretly
> The worlde was never meri
> Since chyldren where so boulde.
> Now every boy wil be a teacher

> The father a foole, and the chyld a preacher
> Thys is preaty geare
> The foole presumptious of youth
> wyll turne shortly to great ruth
> I feare. I feare. I feare.
>
> (Wever, 1550, sig.Ciiir)[7]

This passage embodies every stereotype of Catholic speech that we have yet encountered with relation to the 'merry world' proverb. That Hypocrisie must speak in secret recalls Fielde's report of Catholic whispering; the idea that 'every boy wil be a teacher / The father a foole, and the chyld a preacher' mirrors the reports of Catholic opposition to 'every cobler and Tinker' now with the 'New Learning' possessing the ability to know the Scriptures and interpret them themselves. The fathers of the old Catholic Church are thus pushed aside for the young Church of England and its children to become preachers. That this rhetoric is placed in the mouth of Hypocrisie instructs the interlude's audience and readers in its agenda and religious and political leanings. Finally, it is precisely that inversion of hierarchy, the young now ranking above the old, that Wever wishes to express as his metaphor for the superiority of the Reformation and, in the play's larger context, to suggest the importance of the child-monarch's careful selection of those 'old' teachers to whom he submits (King, 1993, p. 93).

3. Nostalgia's ambivalence in *The First Part of the Contention*

Lusty Juventus provides a dramatic precedent for the critique of the 'merry world' which we find in *The First Part of the Contention*. The proverb is the first instance of a commoner's use of rhetorical nostalgia, a rhetoric that figures prominently in the play's succeeding rebel scenes. Nick laments: 'Twas never merry world with us, since these gentle men came up' (TLN 1556). His rhetoric suggests the totalizing perception of the past that nostalgia embodies. But parsing this adage further than a recognition of dissatisfaction allows us a greater understanding of how the rhetoric of nostalgia operates in this scene at large. We may break the maxim into separate, equally meaningful phrases. Individually, these phrases indicate how the past was perceived as a particular rupture from the present and, furthermore, how that past is represented in a specific place.

'It was never' exemplifies the encompassing and simplifying rhetoric which comprises one necessary element of the rhetoric of nostalgia; those who employ the phrase and its close variants imply an omniscient knowledge of history, which indicates a character's foolishness. Such characterization contributes to the multivalent quality of nostalgia which the rebel scenes highlight, as a rhetoric of nostalgia is used by the rebels, Jack Cade, and finally Lord Clifford to varying degrees of efficacy and persuasion. Identifying the rebel with a fool also casts the character in the line of Elizabethan thought that the mob is ignorant, 'that the great herd of people are incapable of political thought' (Bernthal, 2002, p. 268). Stephen Greenblatt suggests as much in his interpretation of Shakespeare's rebels in *The Contention*; he writes that Cade's 'Cockaigne' speech paints his auditors as 'buffoons' who need only 'A few rousing speeches from the aristocrats, with the invocation of the name of Henry V and the threat of a French invasion' to abandon Cade and embrace the state (1983, pp. 23, 24). He suggests then that the rebels have been Cade's unfailingly to this point; however, as Bernthal again argues and as Shakespeare's scenes demonstrate, there exists a duality within the people's character, as Cade's followers both assent and yet consistently dissent from him in a series of hilarious asides; it makes of Cade's world one that is 'continually subverted' (2002, pp. 260, 259).[8] That the rebels ultimately abandon Cade suggests they choose a new utopic vision, one that promises an equality in nobility.

To speak of a 'merry world in England' is to invoke explicitly a popular cultural image of the nation, one mocked by Protestant writings as a Catholic yearning for the past. Indeed, that 'merry world' suggests the very real break in time which the dissolution of the monasteries and the change in the 'ritual season' of England came to represent (Hutton, 1994, pp. 5–39; Duffy, 2005; Knowles, 1976). The proverb encapsulates that sense of temporal discontinuity and dissatisfaction which nostalgia embodies. In Shakespeare's rendering of the proverb, Nick's sense of discontinuity arises from the coming into fashion of gentlemen, which has changed the cultural topography of the 'merry world' and elicited his present disaffection – which, we may presume, influenced his decision to join Cade. Greenblatt argues that this moment represents dissonant 'status relations' that will morph into 'property' relations in Alexander Iden's garden (1983, p. 25); Thomas Cartelli, however, recognizes that 'status relations' remain relevant in the play and the political significance of these lines, yet fails to observe their established proverbial heritage. Citing the language of rebels in a 1596 Oxfordshire rising, Cartelli stresses that 'one may reliably assume that Shakespeare was

appropriating an expression that would have been familiar to many' before the rising and the play's first production, but then uses the rising to argue that the phrase could function as a commonplace 'rallying cry' (1994, p. 54). Cartelli cites historian Buchanan Sharp's account of the rebellion, in which 'The miller Richard Bradshawe was reported to have declared "that he hoped that before yt were long to see some of the ditches throwne downe, and that yt would never be merye till some of the gentlemen were knocked down"', an expression that assumes these gentlemen have 'come up' (1994, p. 54). What results is Shakespeare's 'bringing the successive histories of past risings and rebellions [...] into direct contact with latter-day representations of class conflict, thereby giving added currency to an apparently old complaint' (Cartelli, 1994, p. 54). Through the nostalgia of the 'merry world', then, Shakespeare employs a proverbial political discourse that draws its audience into sympathy with the rebels before alienating them with those same rebels' actions.

While Cartelli merely hints at the connection between proverbial rhetoric, idealized nostalgic *topoi*, and expressions of class conflict, Shakespeare's historical sources as well as contemporary complaint literature demonstrate their established relationship. Shakespeare's nostalgic rhetoric was not created in a vacuum: he drew on accounts of the 1381 Peasants' Revolt, led by John Ball. According to Grafton (for whom Ball is 'John Wall'), the rebels were motivated by a sense of a utopian past free from hierarchy and servitude. Ball preached that 'matters go not wel to passe in England in these dayes, nor shall not do untill every thing be common, and that there be no Villeynes nor gentlemen, but that we be all as one' (Bullough, 1957–75, III: p. 129). The expression of discontent with 'England in these dayes' is a sentiment by now familiar to us, and Shakespeare appropriates the report through his rebels, who long for 'all to be in common'. Ball became widely known in various chronicles for his use of the maxim, 'When Adam delv'd, and Eve span, / Who was then a gentleman?' to interrogate England's hierarchical society and rally rebels to his cause (Holinshed, 1586, sig.Ssir). The anonymous *The Life and Death of J[ack] S[traw]*, a contemporary of *The First Part of the Contention* containing verbal and structural parallels with the play, recreates this scene from Blackheath.[9] Parson Ball initiates the play's exploration of socio-economic inequity:

> England is grone to such a passe of late,
> That rich men triumph to see the poore beg at their gate.
> But I am able by good scripture before you to prove,

> That God doth not this dealing allow nor love.
> But when Adam delved, and Eve span,
> Who was then a Gentleman [. . .]
> But merrily with the world it went,
> When men eat berries of the hauthorne tree,
> And thou helpe me, Ile helpe thee.
>
> (*Life and Death*, 1593, sigs.A4r–v)

Ball explicitly links here the world's previous merriment with the interrogation of a class-based society and the implied *creation* of status discrepancies. Significantly, that explicit connection is suggested in another contemporary source of the Adam and Eve proverb, Robert Greene's *A quip for an upstart courtier* (1592). Through the voice of 'cloth breeches', Greene interrogates the socio-economic strata that determines an individual's worth, demanding:

> Mounsier Malapart are you therefore my superiour, because you are taken up with Gentlemen, and I with the yeomanry? Doth true vertue consist in riches, or humanity in welth? Is auncient honour tied to oneward bravery? Or not rather true Nobility, a mind excellently qualified with rare vertues? I will teach thee a lesson worth the hearing, proud princocks, how Gentility first sprung upe, I will not forget the olde wives logick, when Adam delvd and Eve span, who was then a Gentleman? (Greene, 1592, sig.B2r)[10]

In a similar manner to Fielde's rhetoric, Greene establishes through *interrogatio* a series of claims against inequality based on class and birth, relying on *paroemia* as the summary and potent climax of his argument. His dialogue also indicates the currency of this discontented language and the relationship between a perfect past embodied in a 'merry world' / Eden and the intolerable present peppered with upstart gentry.

As *The Contention*'s rebels continue their ruminations on the state of the commonwealth, their language affirms nostalgia's association with class conflict. Building on the lament of the rising gentry, Nick's fellow rebel George declares, 'I warrant thee, thou shalt never see a Lord weare a leather aperne now a-daies' (TLN 1557–8). His rhetoric calls attention to the visual markers of class, and in coupling that observation with the use of 'now a-daies' George suggests – like Nick, and like Parson Ball in *Jack Straw* – that the creation of class and the rise of the gentry are

developments characteristic of *this* time. Creating a causal relationship between the present's inferiority and the gentry's ascension, Nick and George's discourse imagines a temporal rupture that has distanced them from a golden age where class did not exist. And while there is a humour undergirding these lines, it neither diminishes nor devalues the political sentiments the rebels express: in laughing with nostalgia's proponents, the audience enters further into their world and discontent. Laughter here may thus operate as recognition.

The First Part of the Contention translates Grafton's report into the rebels' longing for an equitable, bygone past and the implicit desire for that past's reclamation, which constructs the context of Cade's success. It is not until Cade offers his audience a utopian Land of Cockaigne, however, that they laud and accept him. He vows 'reformation', promising 'seven half-penny loaves sold for a penny, and the three-hoopt pot, shall have ten hoopes, and it shall be felony to drink small beere' (TLN 1589–92). Adding that 'there shall be no money' and 'All shall eat and drink on [his] score', Cade rhetorically crafts a world that neither he nor his auditors have ever known. Its appeal to a shared, imagined space – a collective unknown – and the suggestion that that space is not only reclaimable but close at hand foments action and rouses Cade's followers to arms. Whilst Greenblatt again dismisses this rhetoric as that of ill-advised great expectations – a 'wry' depiction of Shakespeare's – we see the common image invoked as one shared with the audience, one in which they are implicated (1983, pp. 23, 24). Preposterous as it may seem, it is these idyllic fundamentals of Cade's vision which are crucially suasive, rather than Cade himself.

Cade, in the end, represents inversely a suggested superiority of the present over the past, as the 'before' he seeks to reconstruct assumes increasingly grotesque elements. He would have England revert to its feudal laws; he seems to go further and further into the past:

> There shall not a noble man weare a head on his shoulders,
> But he shall paie me tribute for it.
> Nor there shal not a mayd be married, but he shal fee to me for her.
> Maydenhead or else, ile have it my selfe,
> Marry I will that married men shall hold of me in capitie,
> And that their wives shalbe as free as hart can thinke, or toong can tell.
>
> (TLN 1828–33)

Cade's correct use of current and historical legal terms ('in capitie' is *in capite*) exposes how his own knowledge of history and law is extensive

enough to pervert its course, and he may represent the same educated men he publicly denounces; he is no malapropistic Dogberry. Furthermore, the speech marks a revolution away from his first appeal to the Kentish rebels, when he proclaimed his programme to improve their lives as well as all of England; his latest assertions, reflecting his declaration that all laws shall come from his mouth, impart only what he shall do for himself. The people he purports to represent are given no voice to reply, and it is telling that the destruction he has fomented must now be arrested as the audience learns London Bridge is in flames. In Cade's upside-down world, then, invoking nostalgia can simply reveal the brutality of the past even in light of present practice.

Ultimately, the use of nostalgia thwarts Cade's ambitions and his followers' hopes. Lord Clifford persuades the rebels to put down arms against England and take them up against France – and he succeeds because his rhetoric reorients his auditors' imagination, their nostalgic fantasy. He demands:

> Why country-men and warlike friends of Kent,
> What meanes this mutinous rebellions,
> That you in troopes do muster thus your selves,
> Under the conduct of this Traitor Cade?
> To rise against your soveraigne Lord and King,
> Who mildly hath his pardon sent to you,
> If you forsake this monstrous Rebell here?
> If honour be the marke whereat you aime,
> Then haste to France that our forefathers wonne,
> And winne again that thing which now is lost.
>
> (TLN 1860–9)

Clifford's interrogation does not seek answers – it is 'fygurative', which Peacham explains 'make[s] [an] Oration more sharpe and vehemente, and muche better set forward [the speaker's] purpose' (1577, sig.Liiir). What Clifford relies on here is the evocation of both a known and an unknown past to persuade the rebels to allegiance to the crown. Even in its vagueness, Clifford's use of 'forefathers' and their victories in France suggests the image of Henry V; his offer of honour and the reclamation of England's inheritance implicitly promises the rebels a preferable future, one that will allow them to live, through posterity, in the annals of the past. In Clifford's offer, the rebels abandon the present. He glosses history to appropriate the imagination the rebels had allied with Cade's

utopia; he appeals to their ability to idealize the past and future to urge them to resurrect Henry and conquer France again. Moreover, Clifford appeals to their sense of duty to the past: this speech capitalizes simultaneously on the politic opportunity to rally the discontent around a utopian ideal and on the personal motive for honour and, perhaps, equality.[11]

Clifford's successfully persuasive rhetoric reveals the commons' susceptibility to idealizations of the past in the future. The attraction of the desire to recreate a perfect past in the future is indeed suggested in the writings of those Reformation polemicists who sought to demonize any language of the 'old days', and old ways, of a preferable, Catholic past. In a similar manner to these authors' ventriloquism, the use of nostalgia by various characters implies its potentially dangerous fluidity. Indeed, the rhetoric of nostalgia de-mystifies the *topos* of the proverbial 'merry world', as this cultural commonplace is dramatically employed to illuminate the instability of such constructions. My analysis of *The First Part of the Contention* has illustrated how nostalgia becomes unstable, as it may be appropriated not solely as the voice of the state or as the voice of dissent, but ultimately as a rhetoric that highlights its own constructed nature. That constructedness, Shakespeare shows us, has seemingly always been extant: in presenting an age for which Elizabethans would perhaps have been nostalgic, he shows a mirror to his audience's sense of nostalgia and suggests nostalgia's timelessness. Thus even while his Elizabethan audience might have been ruminating on the myriad troubles of their present – the succession crisis, the economy – *The Contention*'s use of nostalgia intimates that it is futile to wish for the past and to praise its perceived superiority, because even that past was discontented. We see as if in a frame a never-ending spectrum of political and present discontent.

Notes

1. Throughout this article the use of u/v and i/j is modernized.
2. Diverging from common scholarly practice, I use the title of the 1594 Quarto edition, *The First Part of the Contention between the Two Noble Houses of York and Lancaster* (henceforth TLN) rather than the Folio's *The Second Part of King Henry the Sixt*. I accept the Oxford editors' argument that 'the quarto's [title] is probably closer to the title by which the play was contemporarily known than the Folio's' (Wells, 1987, p. 177).
3. Pieter Bruegel the Elder's 1567 'Land of Cockaigne' is perhaps our best reference point for this.

4. 'Brave Peeres of England, Pillars of the state, / To you Duke Humphrey must unfold his griefe, / What did my brother Henry toyle himself, / And waste his subjects for to conquere France?' (TLN 99–102).
5. Menewe is probably a pseudonym for Becon (Halkett and Laing, 1926–1962, p. 332). Seymour Baker House makes no mention of 'Gracious Menewe' as one of Becon's pseudonyms, and places him in Germany at this time, writing that in late 1554 Becon was in Frankfurt, and 'by the summer of 1556 Becon had moved to Marburg, where his wife was living' (House, 2004).
6. Becon and Foxe knew each other in exile (House, 2004). According to Bullough, Shakespeare 'certainly knew' Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* (1957–75, III: 90).
7. This signature is repeated in the text: this is the first of two. William Copland and John Awdely separately reprinted the interlude in 1565; the major textual difference between these plays is that the 1550 epilogue makes supplications 'for the prosperous estate of our noble & vertuous king' (sig.E.iir), while the 1565 epilogue reads 'queen'.
8. However, as Longstaffe argues, we may read those asides not as a rhetorical barrier separating Cade from his on- and off-stage auditors, but as an inclusive act of carnival (1998, pp. 13–35).
9. Prior publication does not indicate prior performance, however: Charles Forker dates *Jack Straw* to 1591–2, after the *Contention* and the first tetralogy (1590–1) (1997, p. 59). The *Contention*'s most recent editors, Knowles and Warren, do not enter into a discussion of the play's date in relation to *Jack Straw*. It is quite possible that *Jack Straw* drew on the success and power of the rebel scenes in the *Contention*, which Knowles argues possess a 'dramatic power [that] was to remain unsurpassed' (Shakespeare, 1999, p. 74).
10. Unsurprisingly Greene expresses the 'world was never' idea also: 'the world was never in quiet devotion, neighbourhoode nor hospitality never flourished in this land, since such up start boies & shittle witted fooles became of the ministry' (1592, sig.E4v).
11. Discussing *1 Henry VI*, Jerome Mazzaro highlights how the play aligns this sense of duty to the past with the English, while the French are motivated solely by what might be gained in the future: 'In contrast to Plantagenet [. . .] whose book of memory binds his future ("self") to his father's and uncle's past efforts to restore family claims [. . .] Joan is the classic opportunist, using whatever means are immediately necessary to effect her ends'; moreover, 'The opportunism of [the French] again contrasts with the consistent appeals to memory that the English demonstrate [. . .] their battles fulfill obligations to a noble past by righting recent violations of chivalric ideals and martial decorum' (Mazzaro, 2001–02, pp. 401, 402).

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12

Representations of Ageing Female Rulers on the Early Modern Stage

Yvonne Oram

Ageing women were openly active, responsible and useful members of early modern society, as historical evidence shows – indeed, Queen Elizabeth eventually provided an obvious example of a post-menopausal woman running a country. Yet the publicly performed drama of the day did not reflect this social reality. The many mature female characters in all kinds of Elizabethan and Jacobean plays were presented almost exclusively within the framework of the family, as wives, mothers and/or stepmothers, and widows.[1]

Stage representation of the older female contained by domesticity in this way reinforced the importance of strict male governance in a family setting and this applied even when the character was a ruler in her own right or a key member of a ruling family: she was invariably presented in relation to her husband (alive or dead) or to grown children. This allowed for ongoing reassurance that any inappropriate behaviour could be checked by her husband or, in his absence, by male offspring or some other authoritative male relative. It is likely that as a patron of players who 'also saw their performances' (Weimann, 1978, p. 172) Queen Elizabeth was aware of positive and negative stage representations of ageing female rulers.

My essay examines established dramatic representations of older women, evident before and beyond Elizabeth's reign, considering examples of the stereotypical depiction of ageing female rulers and how this reflects male concerns about the old woman's potential for disorderly and disruptive actions and utterances. I then focus on two characters who appear to subvert the stereotypes – Shakespeare's Cleopatra and Fletcher's Bonduca. These women are authoritatively outspoken, accessing the extensive language which is power on stage and which gives a character dramatic focus. Yet while both plays celebrate the

creative power of the older female, beyond domesticity, the death of each Queen – and therefore her loss of power – is also emphasized.

Historians have gathered much evidence of mature women taking positions of responsibility throughout early modern society, not just within the home and the family circle. Even though, like their younger counterparts, they were officially excluded from political involvement, many were active in this way. Older women attending on Queen Elizabeth 'participated in an elaborate network of influential and political interconnection' (Brown, 1999, p. 132) and those of her Privy Chamber remained in place for some years (Barroll, 1991, p. 202). Throughout the period older women were active in the arts as writers, translators and as literary patrons. Examples include Lady Anne Bacon, Mary Sidney Countess of Pembroke, and Lady Elizabeth Russell who, at 70, prepared and published her English version of a Latin work (Warnicke, 1983 and Bell, Parfitt and Shepherd, 1990). Beyond court circles mature women also participated in public life. They worked as physicians, albeit unauthorized by the College of Physicians, as surgeons operating under licence and as hospital matrons and plague inspectors (Pelling, 1997 and Willen, 1988). A key figure in any community was 'the woman with knowledge, the midwife who was herself a mother' (Mendelson and Crawford, 1998, p. 203) and the importance of this, usually, mature woman is reflected in the strict regulations relating to her licensing and practice (Harley, 1990). Older women also served their communities as jurors and teachers, and in key areas of the nation's economy – agriculture, the cloth trade, fishing, manufacturing of all kinds and the preparation and sale of food, including butchery (Oldham, 1985 and Crawford and Gowing, 2000). The widow of a tradesman would often continue her husband's business which gave her a measure of authority in her community, as did the widow's civic responsibility for the payment of taxes and parish rates (Erickson, 1993). In many such roles older women were seen as having 'a positive value in society which men over 50 would have lacked' (Pelling, 1991, p. 84).

While it is obvious that not all ageing women had the kind of power wielded by their ageing Queen, Pat Thane's observation that 'rich old women generally carried more clout than poor old men' (Thane, 2000, p. 7) would apply to many of Elizabeth's subjects as well as her own court circle. Nevertheless, instead of foregrounding or holding up to example the social power and civic involvement of the older woman, plays in the public theatres depicted this character far more narrowly. The ideal old female was presented on the early modern stage

as accepting age without fuss, denying her own sexuality and providing a good example to the younger generation. In *Sappho and Phao* (1584) John Lyly gives the mature Sybilla a substantial role as guide to Phao through the trauma of unrequited love, while the same writer's *Mother Bombie* (1589) shows the 'good old woman' of the title (5.3.2033) issuing prophecies for the guidance of all concerned. The Abbess, in Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors* (1592), takes Adriana to task for jealous nagging and the young wife accepts the justice of the older woman's criticisms – 'She did betray me to my own reproof' (5.1.91). In contrast, the old woman's potential for intemperance, disobedience and leading others astray was also emphasised. Frenzied female behaviour has house and locality in an uproar in *Gammer Gurton's Needle* (1553, published in 1575) by William Stevenson, as the garrulous crone gets into an undignified shouting match and fist fight with her equally loquacious old neighbour, Dame Chat. In Fletcher's *Rule A Wife and Have A Wife* (1624) two Old Ladies are approached for advice on marriage by Margarita, who is eager for sexual pleasure. One agrees this is 'necessary as meat to a young Lady' (2.1.14) and her companion adds cynically,

> But might not all this be, and keep ye single?
> You take away variety in marriage,
> The abundance of the pleasure you are barred then
>
> (2.1.16–18)

The conversation then moves on to explore ways of choosing a suitable husband, with the two old women actively encouraging the younger to select a mate who can be cuckolded with ease. In the early modern period this dramatic stereotyping of the ageing female would have been helpful to boy actors accessing 'a semiotics of dress and gesture' when playing women's roles (Howard and Rackin, 1997, p. 141). However, it must also be acknowledged that such literary images were valuable to men in helping to establish 'control of women through their fear of fitting an absurd or dishonourable stereotype' (Wiltenburg, 1992, p. 253). That the older woman was also loquacious provided an uncomfortable and unavoidable reminder of male inability to silence the female tongue – 'for women to speak is to threaten the system of difference which gives meaning to patriarchy' (Belsey, 1985, p. 191). So the stereotypes of good and bad old women were used no matter how elevated the social status of the ageing female character concerned and the

importance of the male-governed family as a means of containment was regularly confirmed on stage.

The position of wife carried with it the social and legal necessity of bowing to the rule of a husband. The need for that husband to exercise control over even an ageing wife was frequently shown in early modern drama and perhaps most remarkably in John Marston's *Antonio's Revenge* (1600). In this version of the Hamlet story the hero's mother the Duchess Maria, who is, inadvertently, about to wed her husband's killer, is admonished not by her son but by the ghost of her dead spouse. Andrugio appears the night before the wedding and, perched on his wife's bed, reads her a lecture on marital obedience beyond the grave – 'Hast thou so soon forgot Andrugio?/ Are our love-bands so quickly cancelled?' (3.5. 3–4). He then forgives her and urges her to join their son, Antonio, in executing his revenge plan. Antonio arrives rather late on the scene, ready to harass Maria, but it is her husband who controls her schooling here.

The expectation of wifely obedience and loyalty to a husband, even when he is responsible for breaking the relationship, features powerfully in *All Is True (Henry VIII)* (1613) by Shakespeare and Fletcher. Katherine of Aragon is presented initially as a valued mature spouse and then as a rejected marriage partner. She is aware that, like her less elevated contemporaries, she owes her position in the world to that of her husband and if he divorces her she will be turned 'into nothing' (3.1.113). The strength of her position as Henry's wife and Queen of England is established in Act 1 when she speaks out in defence of her husband's good name. She loyally pinpoints the actions of Wolsey for which Henry will be blamed publicly and when the Cardinal contests this it is the Queen who challenges him. Katherine is allowed this outspokenness by her husband as it is driven by love and care for him, thus emphasizing the bond of trust between them. The restrained loyalty of this 'true and humble wife' (2.4.21) gives way to passionate defiance in the divorce proceedings in Act 2. Katherine's public presentation of her own record as a good wife is measured and well-argued. As his partner of 'Upward of twenty years' (2.4.34) she at first addresses her husband in intimate tones, 'I have been to you a true and humble wife,/ At all times to your will conformable,/ Ever in fear to kindle your dislike' (2.4.21–3). Here the image of conjugal obedience is enhanced by her mention of the 'many children' she bore Henry (2.4.35). The fact that she does not discuss the fate of these offspring indicates painful, personal loss, shared privately between husband and wife. She then shifts her discourse from the personal to the political,

referring to the lawful, well-grounded nature of their marriage (2.4.49). When Wolsey enters the debate Katherine lashes out at his 'arrogancy, spleen and pride.' (2.4.108) but it is clear that her anger over male 'cunning' (2.4.105) also embraces the husband whose divorce strategy challenges her chastity and good name. Certainly when she leaves the proceedings without permission it is Henry's personal request to 'Call her again' (2.4.122) which she so publicly refuses:

> They vex me past my patience [. . .]
> I will not tarry; no nor ever more
> Upon this business my appearance make
> In any of their courts.
>
> (2.4.127–30)

Katherine's vigour in defending her marriage and her honour is still evident in her powerful confrontation with Wolsey and Campeius in Act 3, when they urge her to knuckle under and accept Henry's protection or be sent away in disgrace. She declares, 'Nothing but death/ Shall e'er divorce my dignities' (3.1.140–1). However, she cannot sustain this defiant position and acknowledges that she must submit to her husband's rule as the only way to engage his affection for, 'I am old my lords,/And all the fellowship I hold now with him/Is only my obedience.' (3.1.119–121).

The old and ageing woman as a mother was also a key character in early modern drama and the importance of her setting a good example to adult offspring in terms of duty and self-effacement was regularly emphasized. Elinor, the Queen Mother in Peele's *Edward I* (1591) demonstrates deep veneration for her son and her eagerness to be reunited with her 'lovely Edward' is not deemed foolish ('tis but mothers love') even when she faints away at the sight of him (1.29.A2v, 1.44.A3r). In Henry Chettle's *The Tragedy of Hoffman* (1602) we see the Duchess Martha prepared to wait all night 'on the humble earth' (4.2.1715) for the arrival of her son and when she falls asleep at this task she presents an image of 'one of her sex so perfect' that the vengeful Hoffman is unable to kill her (4.2.1864). When she learns that her son is dead she wants only to entomb herself in a cell with his body. Stage stereotypes of the bad mother suggested that lack of care for her offspring could be driven by a desire for personal power. The murderous Queen Mother in Marlowe's *The Massacre at Paris* (1593) aims to govern no matter which son is on the throne – 'For I'll rule in France, but they shall wear

the crown,/ And if they storm, I then may pull them down' (11.43–4). A similar image of a mother's bad influence is seen in Shakespeare's *King John* (1596). At first Queen Eleanor appears just high-handed, briskly identifying Philip the Bastard as her illegitimate grandson and urging him to follow her 'I am a soldier and now bound to France' (1.1.150) leaving John with little option but to agree and knight the newcomer. Once in France, though, Eleanor dominates the negotiations, attacking Constance, asserting the existence of evidence that will refute young Arthur's claim to the English throne and pressing John into tactical agreement with the opposition – 'Urge them while their souls / Are capable of this ambition' (2.1.476–7). That she uses her son to gain power for herself is seen in her suspicions that Constance is just such a mother – 'Thy bastard shall be king / That thou mayst be a queen and check the world' (2.1.122–3). Clearly, her behaviour has undermined her own son who remains weak and vacillating after her death. Indeed, he seems lost without her driving force; his doleful 'What, Mother dead?' (4.2.127) is repeated at line 182: 'My Mother dead!'

It is apparent that the roles of wife and mother within the structure of the family carried the kind of social weight that Queen Elizabeth could not ignore. She represented herself as married to the realm and, although she had no children, was often referred to as Virgin Mother to her people in public writings of the period. Indeed, she appeared to embrace this self-image within a structure of 'fictional families' (Orlin, 1995, p. 90). This presentation was reinforced by Elizabeth's own godson, John Harington, writing of 'Our dear Queen [. . .] and this state's natural mother' (quoted in de Lisle, 2005, p. 10). Such strong images allowed Elizabeth to put a positive spin on the stigma of being an unmarried, mature ruler without heirs. However, incorporating an upbeat angle on the ageing process itself into her self-presentation proved more difficult and the inevitable loss of looks in age was strongly denied in her public displays. She took great pains to image herself as ever young, despite all evidence to the contrary. Paul Hentzer, a German visitor to London, noted Queen Elizabeth 'in the 65th year of her age' as being 'very majestic [. . .] fair but wrinkled' (quoted in Rye, 1967, p. 104). Perhaps these wrinkles were worrying even to such a 'majestic' woman. Roy Strong draws attention to 'the amazing images of Elizabeth painted by Nicholas Hilliard [. . .] in the last decade of her reign' showing the Queen as a young girl, and he also refers to the famous Rainbow Portrait (*c.*1600) which presented her 'rejuvenated face' as Astraea, Queen of Beauty (Strong, 1999, pp. 48, 50). After 1590, portraits of the Queen used a formal, ageless face pattern (Salomon, 1994, p. 82). Yet it seems

this convention was not always followed, for a ruling in the records of the Privy Council for 1596 emphasized that no pictures of the Queen should be allowed 'but such as her Majesty's Serjeant Painter shall first have sight of.' This was to ensure that there was no 'offence and disgrace of that beautiful and magnanimous Majesty wherewith God hath blessed her' (Dasent, quoted in Lockyer and O'Sullivan, 1993, p. 60). Certainly Elizabeth indulged in her own 'painting', using cosmetics to disguise her true age. Yet Steven Mullaney argues that such self display was not 'mere vanity' but deliberately done to 'imbue the ageing natural body of the monarch with the ageless aura of the body politic' (Mullaney, 2001, p. 167). The motives for this masking of the ageing process by the most powerful woman in England may have been mixed, but in doing so she appeared to acknowledge, and perhaps attempt to appease, a generally negative and critical attitude towards loss of looks in the older woman. (For a fuller discussion of the Queen's relationship with portraits and mirrors as an ageing ruler see Laura Tosi's chapter in the present volume.)

Evidence of an ageing female's ongoing sexual appetite was also a cause for male anxiety. The older woman seeking sexual satisfaction was a stage character who invariably prompted male mockery and disgust. Such judgements are applied to Eugenia, the Queen Mother of Spain, in *Lust's Dominion or The Lascivious Queen* (1600) attributed to Thomas Dekker, John Day and William Haughton, and a similar view is taken of the equally predatory sex-pot Brunhalt in *Thierry and Theodoret* (1617) by John Fletcher, Philip Massinger and Francis Beaumont. In the absence of a restraining husband it falls upon the sons in each case to control these more than merry widows. After his father's death Philip describes his mother, Eugenia, as creating a 'brothelry' in the bedchamber (1.2.118) while Theodoret, King of France, accuses his widowed mother Brunhalt of indulging in 'loose and lazy pleasures' (1.1.4). The two women are similar in their extreme sensuality. When we first see Eugenia with her lover she is wrestling kisses from him (1.1) and Brunhalt is equally physical with hers, demanding 'kiss me strongly;/ Another, and a third' (1.1.147–8). It is telling that the plots both widows hatch to achieve power require unrestrained sexual desire in others in order to succeed, so their scheming is seen to emerge from their own alarming and overpowering lust. In the end Eugenia demonstrates appropriate repentance, is reconciled with her son and goes off to solitary confinement to 'spin out the remnant of my life,/ In true contrition for my past offences' (5.3.177–8). Brunhalt, however, proves less tractable:

> Preach to me not of punishment or fears,
> Or what I ought to be, but what I am,
> A woman in her liberal will defeated,
> In all her greatness crossed, in pleasure blasted;
>
> (5.2.114–17)

Finally she kills herself and is promptly erased from public memory and public discourse by her son, who allows her 'A private grave, but neither tongue nor honour' (5.2.195).

The need for male control of the wayward old woman in a powerful position seems to be a key element in *Antony and Cleopatra* (1607) and *Bonduca* (1613). Shakespeare apparently presents a lust-driven older woman fearful of losing her sexual attraction, while Fletcher utilizes the equally negative image of the ageing female who speaks out too loudly and too often. However, both dramatists subvert these stereotypes. Cleopatra's seeming vanity is set within a political context, demonstrating the importance to her position and her country of possible loss of sexual power in age. Shakespeare also gives his Queen language which reveals her ability to both conform to and sweep aside appropriate female behaviour. Fletcher, too, shows a woman struggling to access appropriate language and conduct as she aspires to a man's role. Cleopatra is astute in her belief in the power of words, while Bonduca adopts what she believes is suitable masculine language to convey strength and aggression.

Much has been written about Cleopatra's self-presentation in this play though little is placed in the context of her being an ageing woman. Janet Adelman, in an early essay, considers this only in relation to 'the antiquity of her race' and sets Cleopatra 'outside the range of time altogether' (Adelman, 1973, p. 138). Joyce Carol Oates has acknowledged that Antony and Cleopatra 'are not youthful lovers', but concentrates her discussion on the age difference between Antony and Caesar (Oates, 2000, p. 6). Yet, just as Queen Elizabeth's public presentation in terms of social and sexual politics was influenced by the ageing process, so the stage presentation of Cleopatra engages fully with this aspect of female rule. Her apparently self-congratulatory acceptance of being 'wrinkled deep in time' (1.5.29) and the easy dismissal of her 'salad days' (1.5.72) are speedily undermined by the news of Antony's re-marriage. Her physical attack on the messenger who brings this information and the words she uses – 'Rogue, thou hast lived too long' (2.5.73) – reflect a more realistic acknowledgement of her own age. By contrast, the Queen in

Samuel Daniel's *The Tragedy of Cleopatra* (1593) meditates more soberly upon her situation, considering herself in Antony's debt because he gave up so much for a woman past her best:

> And yet thou came'st but in my beauty's wane,
> When new appearing wrinkles of declining
> Wrought with the hand of years, seemed to detain
> My grace's light
>
> (1.171–4)

Such calm acceptance by an ageing woman of 'this Autumn of my beauty' (1.181) is confirmed as appropriate behaviour through the dignity of the language. The loss of self-control in Shakespeare's Cleopatra is cause for discomfort in all who witness it. The battered messenger takes to his heels; Charmian urges greater self-restraint upon her mistress – 'keep yourself within yourself' (2.5.75); the audience is made equally uneasy. Yet the hysterical response of this Cleopatra reflects female fears about ageing and its consequences with realistic force. Reassurance about her own looks and sexual attraction is crucial to her for, although we have Enobarbus' assertion that 'Age cannot wither her', Shakespeare makes it clear that his lyrical description of the way she 'pursed up' Antony's heart at Cydnus refers to the start of that relationship (2.2.241, 193–4). When the play opens they have been together for some time and have a number of children. That Cleopatra's first wild reaction to the news of Antony's marriage is followed by probing questions shows the acute consternation of an ageing woman who has lived with her lover for years and is suddenly presented with a younger, potentially more sexually attractive rival. The uncertainty of her final remark – 'All may be well enough' (3.3.46) – reflects the insecurity experienced in this situation even by a woman whose physical attractions are confirmed as timeless by male observation. Shakespeare underlines this by showing the problematic political situation which will develop if Cleopatra has lost Antony. When Alexas flatteringly justifies the messenger's fear by saying that even 'Herod of Jewry' could not face down an irate Cleopatra, the Queen boastfully asserts 'That Herod's head I'll have'. She then has to acknowledge the limitations of her power – 'But how, when Antony is gone, / Through whom I might command it?' (3.3.3, 4–5, 5–6). Her own political position and influence depend upon her lover's continuing support. While this was not the case for Elizabeth I, her own rigorous denial of old age in her public persona certainly prefigures the anxieties of this stage Cleopatra.[2]

Cleopatra's understanding of the slippery nature of language – what it can conceal and reveal – is emphasized in her initial exchange with the luckless messenger from Antony, as she picks at almost every utterance:

MESSENGER: First madam, he is well.
CLEOPATRA: [. . .] we use
To say the dead are well [. . .]
MESSENGER: But yet, madam –
CLEOPATRA: I do not like 'But yet'; it does allay
The good precedence. (2.5.30–2, 49–51)

Similarly, when Thidius brings her Caesar's terms in Act 3, scene 13 she does not miss his reference to Caesar's protection as a 'shroud' and she refers to Egypt's 'doom' in her flowery and ingratiating response (3.13.71, 78). And it is by using language that is witty, direct, over-emphatic and often self-pitying that Cleopatra maintains her lover's focus upon her, spinning words cleverly to hold his attention. Right at the start of the play she turns the interruption from Rome to her own advantage by talking Antony out of seeing the messengers. However, her use of language for such manipulative purposes is not just a politician's public gimmick. Their relatively private confrontation, when Antony is leaving for Rome, sees her scolding and ranting deliberately becoming so uncontrollable that he cannot get a word in edgeways. Despite the apparent hysteria her words are chosen for maximum effect to show him how much he is hurting her. She is 'mightily betrayed!' (1.3.25) and, though aggressively couched, her reference to the 'heart in Egypt' (1.3.41) acts as a prompt for Antony's reassurance that his 'full heart' (1.3.43) is still hers, whatever the changing political situation.

Cleopatra's almost superstitious reliance on the power of language is also seen clearly when Antony is dying, for she tries to use speech to hold off the inevitable, presenting herself as controlling fate in this way – 'let me rail so high / That the false hussy Fortune break her wheel' (4.16.45–6). Even in her angry response to Caesar's renewed overtures – 'He words me girls' – we see the recognition of one skilled speaker by another (5.2.187). The only time her own complex speech patterns collapse is after the moving domestic moments when she helps Antony arm himself for the coming battle, in Act 4. 'He goes forth gallantly' is positive enough, but her final line, 'Then, Antony – but now. Well, on' is fractured and almost incoherent (4.4.36, 38). At this time of private despair she is, uniquely, lost for words.

When we first see Bonduca, her mocking of the defeated invaders of her country as 'Roman girls' (1.1.11) shows that she has internalized male judgements of female weakness. Though schooled in the correct language of victory by her cousin and military commander, Caratach – 'A man would shame to talk so' (1.1.18) – Bonduca's apparent mis-speaking is actually grounded in her understanding of male disgust of the kind we see expressed later by Caratach himself. In similar derogatory terms he castigates the Queen as 'The woman fool', demanding 'who bid you / Meddle in men's affairs?' and ordering her to go home 'and spin, woman, spin, go spin' (3.5.128, 133–4, 135). This string of obvious insults ends in extreme, gender-specific repugnance – 'scurvy woman, beastly woman' (3.5.138).

Eager to acquire the correct language and behaviour of a ruler Bonduca expresses relief that Caratach has saved her from 'a flight of honour' (1.1.126) and, shown the error of her ways, she executes a tactful U-turn: 'Shall we have peace? for now I love these Romans' (1.1.150). Yet this is also judged as intemperate by Caratach – 'Thy love and hate are both unwise ones, lady' (1.1.151) – and it is not until she agrees, more moderately, that 'These Romans shall have worthy wars' (1.1.176) that Caratach feels she has learnt her lesson to 'Allow an enemy both weight and worth' (1.1.186). Fletcher handles Bonduca's schooling here with a fairly light touch, highlighting the dangers of an older woman exercising public power when, as her words reveal, she is at the mercy of conflicting emotions. Beneath the comedy, though, we are shown a sharp-witted ageing female ruler trying to express male attitudes and command male language. The complexity of her struggle to evince a ruler's strength in this way is a reminder of Queen Elizabeth's mingling of male and female in her own self-presentation. Sid Ray comments that Elizabeth presented her 'body politic' as masculine instead of challenging stereotypical beliefs in female authority and speculates that this would be reinforced by Elizabeth remaining 'unwed and childless' (Ray, 2007, p. 18). Mendelson and Crawford acknowledge that Elizabeth 'capitalised on her "feminine" characteristics to achieve well-defined goals of statecraft' yet repressed such characteristics in 'masculine *milieux* like the battlefield', citing her Armada speech to her troops at Tilbury (Mendelson and Crawford, 1998, p. 356).

Both Bonduca and Cleopatra commit suicide rather than submit to Roman rule. However, while the language given to each woman here creates similar images of dignity and defiance, we have different perceptions of the deaths of these ageing stage Queens. Fletcher ensures that the strength and bravery Bonduca demonstrates is undermined

and that her suicide can be forgotten in the final glorification of patriarchy. Bonduca dies at the end of Act 4 with another Act to come in which her character is marginalized in favour of that of Caratach. He is now established as 'the play's true centre' (Leech, 1962, p. 167) and acknowledged as a worthy ally by the Romans: 'through the camp, in every tongue, / The virtues of great Caratach be sung!' (5.3. 203–4). The suicide of Shakespeare's Queen, however, is at the end of the play, the final action of which is the removal of her body. Cleopatra, in all her costumed glory, is still before us as Caesar attempts to reduce the impact of her death, and her presence subverts his intention. 'Cleopatra's own dying postures' have already foiled any plan by Octavius to take control of her 'memorial legacy' (Laourtaris, 2007, p. 157).

These ageing rulers enact their defiance in different ways. From her fortress Bonduca appears publicly, challenging the besieging enemy force whose leaders see her as strong, gallant and still a possible threat:

> See the Icenian queen in all her glory,
> From the strong battlements proudly appearing
> As if she meant to give us lashes!
>
> (4.4.6–8)

And she refuses all offers of mercy in language which eulogizes her country above the power of Rome – ' 'tis fitter I should reverence / The thatched houses where the Britons dwell / In careless mirth;' (4.4. 19–21). This impressive approach to death, in which she might truly match the manliness she has been striving for, is gradually collapsed by Fletcher into a verbose wrangle (4.4.68–121). Crucially, though, he does allow Bonduca strength and control in her challenging final speech – 'If you will keep your laws and empire whole, / Place in your Roman flesh a Briton soul' (4.4.152–3). And after her death the admiring Roman Commander orders 'Give her fair funeral; / She was truly noble, and a queen' (4.4.155–6). In contrast Cleopatra, when captured by Caesar, asserts in private her refusal to submit, sharing her anxieties with her women and acknowledging her value as a trophy to be 'shown in Rome' where 'Saucy lictors / Will catch at us like strumpets' (5.2. 204–5; 210–11). Yet her suicide builds from this fear of personal indignity to a strong and glorious end from which there are no distractions. Shakespeare's intense focus upon Cleopatra's language at her death not only ensures total engagement with her actions but maintains her presence after her death. Her calm responses to the Clown

who brings in the asp suggest quiet amusement, showing a woman at ease with herself. However, there is no abandoning of her state and her insistence upon being dressed in her robes and regalia reflects her understanding that she is engaged in a momentous matter, one which Antony will approve as honourable – 'I see him rouse himself / To praise my noble act' (5.2.279–80). She is not going passively to her death, though, and the wit and ease with words which marked her out in life are not lost. She sensually portrays death as 'a lover's pinch / Which hurts and is desired' (5.2.290–1) and, even as the asp does its work, she is sharply mocking Caesar as an 'ass / Unpolicied' (5.2.302–3). She remains remarkable with her final image of herself as a young mother – 'Dost thou not see my baby at my breast, / That sucks the nurse asleep?' (5.2.304–5). We have had no cause to consider Cleopatra's maternal attributes in this play but at the moment of her death she wittily uses the means of that death to create another dramatic role for herself. The words finally run out: 'What should I stay – ' (5.2.308). But it is telling that she should die in mid-sentence, vocal to the last.

Bonduca is marked down as a bad mother (4.4.93) and Cleopatra has some celebrity status as 'Egypt's widow' (2.1.37) but on stage each operates freely beyond the conventions of marriage and family, creating her own, alternative story. Yet these characters were rare exceptions on the early modern stage where dramatists generally focused on the role of the ageing female with anxiety, distaste and derision, denying any possibility of independence and imaginative creativity. The recurrence of deeply misogynistic, male-authored images alerts the modern reader and audience to the older woman's potential strength and significance. But for Queen Elizabeth and her ageing female subjects the importance of avoiding disobedience, sexual incontinence and outrageous outspokenness was the repressive warning regularly conveyed from the early modern stage.

Notes

1. As the focus of this essay is high-status older women, two other important roles for mature female characters, the nurse to adolescent daughters and the bawd, are not considered here. On this point, see Oram, 2002.
2. Comparisons are often made between Queen Elizabeth and Shakespeare's Cleopatra – especially in terms of harking back to old times. H. Neville Davies notes 'Shakespeare's backward glance' through the 'similarities' in their behaviour (Davies, 1994, p. 127) and Juliet Dusinberre comments on the 'nostalgia[…]the play conjured up for its first audiences' (Dusinberre, 1996,

p. 61). Chris Laoutaris takes this point further, wondering if early audiences would have made connections between Elizabeth's effigy on the Westminster Abbey tomb 'in her golden finery', finished around 1606, and 'Cleopatra's monumental death, in which she dons the trappings of royalty' (Laoutaris, 2007, p. 155).

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13

‘A queen in jest’: Queenship and Historical Subversion in Shakespeare’s *3 Henry VI* and *Richard III*

Kavita Mudan

Although scholars who study Shakespeare are often warned not to assume that any character who is female, royal, or both can be mapped onto the figure of Queen Elizabeth I, it is equally important to remember that awareness of the Queen and what she represented pervades all texts produced during her reign, even if only implicitly. Several chapters in this volume, particularly those of Yvonne Oram and Laura Tosi, explore the complex intersection between stage representations of female rulers such as Shakespeare’s Cleopatra and Webster’s Duchess of Malfi and the shadow of Queen Elizabeth I, and it is within that discussion that this chapter belongs. As Louis Montrose makes clear at the beginning of *The Subject of Elizabeth*, ‘the feminine gender of the ruler had a profound impact upon the relations of power and upon their representation. Such representations, however, not merely were consequences of the ruler’s gender but were themselves particular constructions of it’ (Montrose, 2006, p. 1). This is especially relevant when dealing with the profusion of historical drama in the 1580s and 1590s, when it was growing increasingly clear that the unmarried Elizabeth would be the last member of the Tudor family to wear the English crown.

Shakespeare’s first history tetralogy engages with this anxiety, even if, on the surface, his rendering of the late fifteenth century follows Edward Hall’s *Union of the Two Noble and Illustre Houses of Yorke and Lancaster* (1548). This providential narrative presents the civil wars between the houses of York and Lancaster as a punishment for the deposition of Richard II in 1399, brought to an end by divine intervention in the form of Henry of Richmond’s defeating Richard III at the battle of Bosworth

Field in 1485. Indeed, the final play of the tetralogy, *Richard III*, is suffused with supernatural elements that foreshadow Richard's doom, leading some critics to claim that it oversimplifies the chaotic world created in the three *Henry VI* plays in order to produce an overwhelmingly positive – and politically safe – conclusion that parallels Hall's (see, for example, Riggs, 1991, pp. 140–50; Rackin, 1990, pp. 1–29). However, the play itself resists this reading; Shakespeare makes a number of departures from Hall, particularly in his treatment of women, that sustain the ambiguity of cause and effect that runs through the *Henry VI* plays.

This ambiguity is best illustrated through Shakespeare's fixation on the competing narratives of historical and dynastic legitimacy put forward by the numerous claimants to England's throne. Although it would be disingenuous to propose any direct correlation to Elizabeth I's disputed succession, what is clear is that the civil wars of the fifteenth century, combined with the religious upheavals beginning during the reign of Henry VIII, haunted Elizabethan cultural memory, and that the uncertainty attending upon the Queen's eventual death took on many different forms, including but not limited to staged representations of earlier civil conflicts. What sets Shakespeare's tetralogy apart from other accounts of the Wars of the Roses, whether plays, poetry or more straightforward chronicles, is his placement of queens consort at the centre of these disputes over legitimating narratives. This chapter explores how the character of Lady Grey, later Queen Elizabeth, who appears in the third part of *Henry VI* and *Richard III*, becomes a locus for historiographical interrogation and – unlike her predecessor Margaret of Anjou – proves to be an effective voice of resistance against the rewriting of history and lineage spearheaded by Richard III.

The primary foci for Elizabethan representation in the first tetralogy have been the figures of Joan of Arc and Margaret of Anjou, both framed as cautionary tales for women exercising political power. Leah Marcus, for instance, proposes that Joan 'functions in many ways as a distorted image of Queen Elizabeth I' (Marcus, 1988, p. 53), particularly in terms of ambiguously gendered rhetoric and the religious imagery often associated with both figures. More recently, Kathryn Schwarz has argued that Joan and Margaret signify different aspects of Elizabeth I's otherness – Joan 'embodies contradictory iconographic positions by literalizing a series of tropes, Margaret consolidates contradiction through the explicitness of playing, her masculine performance inseparable from the fictional female body she presents onstage' (Schwarz, 1998, p. 160). It is my belief that Margaret is not the only queen whose function within

the play can be seen as a reflection of Elizabeth I; even if Queen Elizabeth lacks the androgynous implications of Joan and Margaret, her resistance to the tyrannical Richard figures a quieter and more understated political model that in its own way echoes Elizabeth I. She, like Cleopatra in Yvonne Oram's chapter, calls upon the power of rhetoric and speech acts, a power primarily reserved for men, and turns it against them. Moreover, the slow stripping away of the trappings of wifehood and motherhood as her rhetorical power increases aligns her more and more with Elizabeth I as the plays progress.

Both Hall's *Union* and Holinshed's *Chronicles* take as their basis the *Anglica Historia* of Polydore Vergil (1534). All these chronicles are fairly consistent in their portrayal of Elizabeth, which fluctuates between ambivalent and negative. The exception is the unfinished text of Thomas More's *History of King Richard III* (*c.*1513), which appears juxtaposed with Vergil in both Hall and Holinshed and features a wise, pragmatic, and witty Elizabeth who becomes the centre of resistance to the usurping Richard III. Vergil, in contrast, dismisses her as inconstant and meddling, crediting that resistance to Margaret Beaufort, the mother of the future Henry VII. In the plays, these moments of contradiction are heightened through the repeated references to past events – the constant presence of *history* – and the changing circumstances and contexts in which these events are deployed. In this way, the plays not only question their own readings of events, but, by extension, those found in their chronicle sources. At the heart of this interrogation is the fraught relationship between women and political agency, in some ways exemplified by the representation of Elizabeth in the plays and its relationship to chronicle sources. Many modern critics have dismissed Elizabeth as weak or overly domesticated, particularly in comparison with Margaret, but I would argue that her ability to understand the importance of storytelling and historical rewriting without necessarily resorting to it herself, as Margaret and most of the male characters do, sets her apart from them, and places her at the centre of Shakespeare's critique of historical and political rhetoric.[1]

Elizabeth first appears in Act III, Scene II of *3 Henry VI,* where she has requested an audience with the newly made King Edward IV for restitution of her late husband's lands. With his two brothers, Richard and George, providing a running commentary, Edward notices her beauty and elects to 'make a pause' in the hope of seducing her (3.2.10). Richard has already remarked that Edward 'love[s] the breeder better than the male', a passing reference to Edward's reputation as a womanizer that gets limited attention in the *Henry VI* plays, but is turned against him in

Richard III (2.1.42).[2] If Henry VI's mildness makes him 'the hollowness at the centre of the patriarchal edifice' (Rackin and Howard, 1997, p. 85) for the Lancastrian party, Edward's own weakness soon proves to be a similar problem for the Yorkists.

The scene that follows is one of Shakespeare's earlier examples of stichomythia – fast-paced dialogue consisting of single or half-lines between two characters – which emphasizes Elizabeth's quick wits as she turns Edward's numerous double entendres back on him with cautious, measured responses. It is unclear whether she is deliberately misunderstanding him, an ambiguity that appears in the source material as well:

> When the kyng behelde and harde her speake [...] he not alonely pitied her, but also wexed enamored on her [...] whose appetite when she perceyued, she vertuously denied hym, but that she dyd so wysely and that with so good maner and woordes so wel set, that she rather kyndeled his desyre then quenched it. (Hall, 1548, f.18r)

In Shakespeare's version, Richard and George assume she is aware of Edward's intentions and is toying with him. When finally Edward is forced to be blunt – Richard ridicules him as 'the bluntest wooer in Christendom' – she responds with a line lifted almost verbatim from More: 'I know I am too mean to be your queen, / And yet too good to be your concubine' (*3 Henry VI,* 3.2.83, 97–8). His decision to marry her is almost instantaneous, prompted not only by her beauty but also by her 'words [which] doth show her wit incomparable' (3.2.85). Throughout this scene, Elizabeth resists Edward's efforts to emplot her into a known narrative – that of the lusty widow able and willing to become the mistress of a notoriously lusty king – through carefully equivocal language, something Shakespeare does not forget when he places her in opposition to Richard III at the climax of that play.

Elizabeth's wit and rhetorical skill belie the dismissiveness of the three brothers, none of whom refer to her by name throughout the entire scene, and link her with the other powerful female characters in the tetralogy, all of whom are shown to be brilliant orators and whose involvements 'subvert or destroy more valued alliances between men' (Kahn, 1981, p. 55).[3] The next scene, where the marriage ruins Edward's alliance with the powerful Earl of Warwick, echoes the disastrous marriage of Henry VI and Margaret of Anjou in *2 Henry VI*. She is also blamed for the splintering of the York family when Edward begins to favour Elizabeth's family over Richard and George (4.1.51–60).

The placing of Richard's first, famous soliloquy just after Elizabeth agrees to marry Edward forges an implicit connection between the two that Richard later makes explicit when he tells Edward 'in your bride you bury brotherhood' (4.1.55). However, Richard's very presence anticipates his eventual betrayal of Edward; since he is already embedded in the cultural psyche as a hunchbacked villain, Elizabeth's role in the breakdown of the York family is subsumed. Richard constantly blames women for his own actions – particularly in *Richard III*, but also in *3 Henry VI* – making him part of a tradition 'in which the outcome of aggression between men is proleptically installed in the bodies of women as originary cause' (Charnes, 1993, p. 46). Shakespeare questions this attribution of blame throughout the tetralogy, but the discrepancy is particularly glaring in Elizabeth's case.

As part of the chaotic shuffling of thrones between Edward and Henry that makes up the second half of *3 Henry VI*, Shakespeare includes a short scene where the pregnant Elizabeth enters sanctuary.[4] It is dramatically unnecessary – the action could easily have been condensed into a few lines in a messenger's speech, like so many other events in the plays – but appears in both Octavo (1595) and Folio editions, and is significant because it is the first time Elizabeth appears without Richard's commentary.[5] All earlier defences of her marriage have been made to counter an attack by Richard, or with Richard as a hostile witness. Here, Elizabeth reveals a keen awareness of her precarious situation, but also her primary duty as Queen: for the sake of her unborn child, she 'bear[s] with mildness my misfortune's cross' (4.4.19–20). The association of Elizabeth with motherhood – Leah Marcus refers to her at the end of *3 Henry VI* as 'an image of devoted female domesticity' – confers some legitimacy upon her cleverness even as Shakespeare undermines the 'lasting joy' (5.7.46) of Edward's victories by anticipating Richard's destructive actions (Marcus, 1988, p. 94).

In *Richard III*, questions of storytelling and historiography become even more complicated. The introduction of Thomas More's narrative as a counterpoint to Vergil and Hall adds a satiric and deconstructive undertone to Richard's rhetorical manipulations, countered by the growing significance of supernatural elements, particularly surrounding female characters.[6] Elizabeth is, even more so than in *3 Henry VI*, at the centre of these interrogations, repeatedly resisting Richard's attempts to rewrite the events of the previous plays to serve his own purposes. Although her agency within the play is constantly undermined, she provides a reminder of the discrepancy between Richard's revisionist history and what is actually presented onstage. For instance, Richard announces

in his first soliloquy that *he* has laid the plots 'to set my brother Clarence and the King / In deadly hate the one against the other', but later insists first to George and then to others that Elizabeth is responsible – 'Why this is it, when men are rul'd by women' (*Richard III,* 1.1.34–5, 62). Though she has been queen for some time, Richard still refers to her as 'Lady Grey' or, even more pejoratively, 'widow', harkening back to his scornful commentary in *3 Henry VI*, and making her isolated position at court clear well before her first appearance onstage. Thus, we see Richard espousing the Vergil/Hall version of Elizabeth even as the play itself deconstructs his representation by drawing attention to its flimsy foundations.

When Elizabeth does appear, her words seem to support Richard's dismissal of her as self-centred and haughty: 'If [Edward] were dead, what would betide on me' (1.3.6). The emphasis on her low birth and the previous status of her family lend weight to Richard's boast that he has convinced the other lords – 'many simple gulls' to his mind – that ''tis the Queen and her allies / That stir the King against the Duke my brother' (1.3.328, 330–1). This is in spite of Elizabeth's own public denial earlier in the scene; being a woman and not born to royalty, her voice is ignored. In these early scenes, she is often the only woman present onstage, constantly overruled by the men surrounding her. Even her positive associations with motherhood from *3 Henry VI* no longer carry the same weight; motherhood, itself, in *Richard III* becomes a fraught state, exemplified in the relationship between Richard and the Duchess of York.

Richard III contains a number of textual inconsistencies concerning Elizabeth's children by her first marriage, as well as her brothers. Despite repeated references to Elizabeth having more than one brother and more than one son in addition to the two princes, only three Woodville men appear onstage. Lord Rivers is consistently listed as Elizabeth's brother, and the Marquess of Dorset as her son by her first marriage. Lord Grey fluctuates between the two (1.3.37, 67, see notes). It is possible that these are textual errors, or may indicate Shakespeare's own confusion and uncertainty about the Woodville family. However, they also augment the dismissiveness displayed by Richard and the other lords for Elizabeth's family and herself – for instance, in his speech to the Mayor of London, Buckingham's reference to 'a care-craz'd mother to a many sons' is unquestionably pejorative not just in itself but in its larger context of retelling her marriage to Edward to render it invalid (3.7.183).[7] The undermining of Elizabeth's political position through the rewriting of her marriage draws attention to the deployment of storytelling within

the plays to serve political ends, and to Elizabeth's inability, at this point, to harness that power for herself. In light of the appearance of Margaret and her curses – now slowly beginning to bear fruit through the arrest of Rivers and Grey and their deaths, along with that of Hastings – it would seem to be Elizabeth's role as mother and wife that stalls her rhetorical progression.

It is only after Edward's death that Elizabeth gains her own voice, echoing and echoed by the other wronged women not just of this play, but of the tetralogy as a whole. Stage directions in both Quarto and Folio specify that she enters 'with her hair about her ears' – a traditional attitude of mourning, and an echo of descriptions in Vergil and Hall of her reaction to her sons' murder. More provides a similar image of Elizabeth as distraught widow and mother, but places it earlier in his narrative, and Shakespeare follows suit, undercutting the high drama of her mourning by interspersed comments from the Duchess of York, and George's two children. By the end of the scene, Elizabeth and her brother Rivers have made an agreement with the Duke of Buckingham to have the Prince of Wales brought to London with 'some little train' (*Richard III*, 2.2.123). Richard's guiding hand is immediately apparent, despite his silence during this exchange, when, afterward, Buckingham refers to 'the story *we* late talk'd of, / To part the Queen's proud kindred from the Prince' (2.2.149–50, emphasis mine). Elizabeth is once again rendered powerless by the deceit of the men around her, echoing More's statement that the lords did not bear 'eche to other so much loue, as hatred bothe vnto the Quenes parte' (More, 1967, p. 15). When Elizabeth learns of their treachery, she and her younger son retreat to sanctuary, only to discover that, even there, they are not safely out of reach.

More includes a lengthy sequence surrounding the queen's presence in sanctuary, but only small segments appear in the play. Buckingham remarks upon the 'indirect and peevish course' that Elizabeth has taken, and makes it clear that neither he nor Richard have any qualms about removing her son (3.1.31). More's extended scene between the Archbishop of York and Elizabeth, where she extracts a promise from him to protect her son, is completely absent, undermining her supposed power even further. Richard's accusation of 'devilish plots / Of damned witchcraft' (3.4.60–1) directed at Elizabeth and Edward's mistress, Jane Shore, is preposterous for a number of reasons and draws attention to that preposterousness when contrasted with the numerous references to his deformity at birth. Aside from being the first of Richard's failures to reconceptualize both his deformity and Elizabeth's purported power,

it also highlights Elizabeth's lack of supernatural associations compared to the other women in the play.

The constant reminders of the future that permeate Hall's narrative in particular are given new form in *Richard III* through Shakespeare's anachronistic use of Margaret. Although the historical Margaret of Anjou died in 1482, Shakespeare includes her as a symbolic reminder of the weight of history, as well as a voice of prophecy and supernatural knowledge; her repeated references to past crimes subvert Yorkist attempts to rewrite history, while her curses project the past cyclically upon the future. Although Elizabeth states 'I never did her any [wrong], to my knowledge', she is doomed to 'die neither mother, wife, nor England's Queen' for the crime of usurping Margaret's rightful place (1.3.309, 209). Although she is still a mother at the end of *Richard III* in that Princess Elizabeth and Dorset survive, neither fits into a traditional model of patriarchal succession, and it is Elizabeth's loss of *queenly* motherhood, namely the production of an heir, to which Margaret's curse refers. It is here that an echo of that *other* Elizabeth, neither wife nor mother except in the symbolic framework as wife and mother to England, can be found; Queen Elizabeth's rhetorical power increases with her growing resemblance to Shakespeare's own reigning monarch.

Unlike in the *Henry VI* plays, where Margaret appropriates the male power of historical narration, conferring legitimacy in the present by rewriting the past, her purpose here is to simultaneously dismantle those rewritings and refigure her version of the past into a providential framework that damns the Yorkists for their crimes against the Lancastrians. In Act IV, history becomes a series of choric interchanges between what *was* and what *is*, where Margaret's earlier curses serve as a conduit for her systematic unmaking of Elizabeth, line by line, reducing her to 'a queen in jest, only to fill the scene' (*Richard III*, 4.4.91). However, even after this ritual stripping of titles – wife, mother, Queen – Margaret leaves both Elizabeth and the Duchess of York with a new sense of the power of language and storytelling, particularly the latter whose final repudiation of Richard is inextricably linked to his fall.

Elizabeth remains outside this supernatural circle, despite her plea to Margaret to 'teach me how to curse mine enemies' (4.4.117). Although her words do have power, it is that of deception rather than prophecy: she ultimately double-crosses Richard in the same way that she became queen in *3 Henry VI*: by refusing his attempts to re-emplot her. Richard, directly after having been cursed by his own mother, demands Elizabeth's aid in courting her daughter for his queen.

Although Elizabeth's words do not carry the same supernatural resonance as those of Margaret, the Duchess, and, to a lesser extent, Anne, her methodical, line-by-line rebuttal of every attempt Richard makes to rewrite his history (a desire made explicit in his request to 'Plead what I will be, not what I have been', 4.4.414) gives her power that nobody else has, not even the divinely sanctioned Richmond. Indeed, as she clearly states, the only way for Richard to win her daughter and, by extension, keep his throne, is to 'put on some other shape, / And not be Richard, that hath done all this' (4.4.286–7).

Richard's response follows a previous pattern as well – the pattern of his courtship of Anne, where he resituates the responsibility for all of his actions in her through the deployment of Petrarchan motifs. When this fails, his ensuing long speech, rather than inviting Elizabeth 'to see herself *reflected in him*, as immensely powerful' as Anne did, appeals to the material considerations emphasised by Vergil and Hall in their descriptions of Elizabeth's capitulation, complete with homilies on the mutability of all women (Waller, 1986, p. 172). Once again, however, Elizabeth undermines both his attempts at recontextualization and her own historical emplotment as a foolish and capricious woman. Even when she gives the impression of having surrendered, her words are deliberately ambiguous, while Vergil and Hall's denunciations boil down to a single line of Richard's: 'Relenting fool, and shallow, changing woman' (4.4.431). In the next scene, Stanley makes it clear that Elizabeth's surrender was a ruse: he tells Richmond's spy that 'the Queen hath heartily consented / [Henry] should espouse Elizabeth her daughter' (4.5.7–8). The juxtaposition of political agency – whether Elizabeth's in cementing the alliance between her and Richmond, or Stanley's later deception of Richard – with the ghostly visitations before the battle, rather than privileging the supernatural over the political, presents them alongside one another as part of a multiplicity of reasons for Richmond's victory.

The effect of this direct encounter between Elizabeth and Richard is not just to mirror the earlier stichomythic dialogue between him and Anne, but also to place Elizabeth firmly in the position of his successful adversary. In both Vergil and Hall, this role is played by Margaret Beaufort, but Shakespeare excises her altogether, except for a fleeting reference by Elizabeth, who claims that Margaret 'loves not me' and remarks upon 'her proud arrogance' (1.3.23, 24).

It could well be said that *Richard III* is haunted by the ghosts of absent women; women who are mentioned in the text, and are significant in the source material, but never appear onstage. I have already

mentioned Margaret Beaufort, and briefly touched on Mistress Shore, who is repeatedly invoked to discredit both Edward and Lord Hastings, although Richard fails in his attempt to accuse her and Elizabeth of witchcraft. Even More, from whom the original account of Mistress Shore comes, acknowledges that he has interrupted his 'remembraunces of great matters' to include her (More, 1967, p. 56).[8]

The most notable absence, however, is that of Elizabeth of York. Argued over, and ultimately referenced in Richmond's final speech as one of 'the true succeeders of each royal House' – himself being the other – whose marriage and heirs will 'enrich the time to come with smooth-fac'd peace' (5.5.30, 33), she never actually appears onstage. This is in contrast to two earlier plays included amongst Shakespeare's sources, Thomas Legge's *Richardus Tertius* and the anonymous *True Tragedy of Richard III* (*c.*1594), both of which stage the marriage of Elizabeth and Richmond. Legge's play also includes two separate courtship scenes in the second half, the first, where Richard successfully wins over Elizabeth Woodville, and a second, when Elizabeth of York rejects him. Shakespeare is therefore making a deliberate dramatic choice to exclude the younger Elizabeth entirely from his conclusion, in contrast to Elizabeth I's own repeated references to her grandmother as a marker of her legitimacy, particularly in her coronation pageant.

Richmond himself is constantly surrounded by male characters; the only two women mentioned in connection with him are his mother and Elizabeth of York, neither of whom appear onstage. The victory at the end of the play is a decidedly *masculine* affair, as opposed to Hall's text, which compares the union of Elizabeth and Henry to that of the Godhead and manhood. Shakespeare's choice to ignore the symbolic centrepiece of his chronicle sources reveals a deep-rooted anxiety for the Tudor dynasty, which, in the 1590s, was coming to an end.

The excising of Elizabeth of York is the culmination of a long series of movements within the tetralogy to dismantle and interrogate the providential vision of the chronicles and their readings of events and characters. That so many of these interrogative moments seem to involve Elizabeth Woodville might simply reflect the addition of More's text to an already volatile mix of sources, but I would argue that Shakespeare's depiction of Elizabeth is, in fact, consistent through both *3 Henry VI* and *Richard III*. Although she does not appropriate masculine roles or rhetoric as Margaret does, her rebellion against dismissive emplotment first by Edward and then by Richard plays a prominent role in the play's denouement. Furthermore, her lack of supernatural associations, rather than cementing a providentialist interpretation of the

tetralogy's ending, questions it by adding that second, political element that sustains the competing histories and ambiguity of cause and effect that characterise the *Henry VI* plays.

Elizabeth I attempted strict control of her own representation, whether visual or narrative. Montrose remarks upon sweeping campaigns both early and late in her reign to direct circulation of her image amongst printers and engravers (2006, pp. 215–22). Nonetheless, countless different versions flourished in England and abroad, such that, as I remarked at the beginning of this paper, it is difficult not to imagine a female character, let alone a queen, who was not in some way mapped onto her. It is not Shakespeare, however, who explicitly connects Queen Elizabeth Woodville to her great-granddaughter. *The True Tragedy of Richard III*, almost certainly one of Shakespeare's sources, ends with a series of set speeches that detail the triumphs of Henry VII and Elizabeth of York's descendants. The final monologue, a panegyric to 'Worthie Elizabeth, a mirrour in her age', is recited by Elizabeth Woodville, a visual rather than rhetorical association meant to cement that play's neat conclusion (*True Tragedy*, 1929, TLN 2192). Samuel Daniel, in Book VIII of the 1609 edition of his unfinished epic poem *The Civil Wars*, interrupts his recital of the ills brought on by Edward IV's marriage to Lady Grey – these 'sad and grauer businesses' – to linger on that lady and 'thus t'expresse / *Elizabeth*, for our *Elizaes* sake; / Who grac't the *Muses* (which her Times became): / For, they who giue them comfort, must haue fame' (Daniel, 1609, VIII.77.3, 5–8). That Daniel was drawing on *3 Henry VI* in his depiction of Elizabeth is clear from the scene itself, which emphasizes her verbal dexterity and cleverness, and his digression into a panegyric of the late Elizabeth I forges a direct link between them as two queens bound to resist being trapped by narratives of any making but their own.

Notes

1. Dash calls her 'less heroic' than Margaret (Dash, 1981, p. 187); Rackin and Howard refer to her as 'a ventriloquist's dummy' whose motives are 'irrelevant to the outcome of the plot' (Rackin and Howard, 1997, pp. 108–9); Liebler and Shea repeatedly claim she is 'passive' and 'weak' (Liebler and Shea, 2001, pp. 91, 93).
2. Heywood is more detailed, relegating most of the political concerns to the background and concentrating on Edward's affair with Jane Shore.
3. For a discussion of how Elizabeth's name is represented in speech prefixes, see Cox and Rasmussen's introduction in *3 Henry VI*, pp. 173–5.

4. The language in this scene reflects Holinshed more than Hall, who only mentions Elizabeth's situation in passing. Holinshed, drawing on earlier Yorkist sources, attributes to her 'greate pacience' (Holinshed, 1577, p. 1332).
5. See *The True Tragedy of Richard of York* (*3 Henry VI*, Appendix 1, pp. 369–409), ll. 2379–401.
6. Supernatural elements are constantly being undercut in the first two *Henry VI* plays; for instance, Joan's unsuccessful conjuring in *1 Henry VI*, Eleanor Cobham's prophecies, and the false miracle in *2 Henry VI*. *3 Henry VI* is more ambiguous, presenting curses and prophecies alongside human elements as part of its complicated presentation of cause and effect, and *Richard III* makes them even more prominent.
7. It is here that Shakespeare's excision of More's scene between Edward and the Duchess of York where she imagines a pre-contract between him and another woman becomes significant; in the universe of the plays, the validity of Edward's marriage, much like the legitimacy of Margaret of Anjou's son in *3 Henry VI*, is never meant to be in question.
8. Shore, a popular figure after the publication of the 1563 *Mirror for Magistrates* where she is the subject of a tragedy by Thomas Churchyard, is one of the two protagonists of Heywood's *Edward IV*, where the titular king is displaced by the middle-class concerns of Shore and her husband.

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14

Mirrors for Female Rulers: Elizabeth I and the Duchess of Malfi

Laura Tosi

What does a female ruler see or want to see when she looks at herself in the mirror? Perhaps a mighty monarch, a beautiful woman, or a glimpse of her future self through the investigation of her first wrinkles and white hairs. In Kapur's film *Elizabeth* (1998) the Queen is seen to practise the public speech where she will ask her Parliament to pass the Act of Uniformity, to ensure that it is effective and persuasive. The camera becomes a sort of mirror as we contemplate her attempts and frustration: one wonders whether the real Elizabeth would have used mirrors in a similar way to monitor her public speaking and oratorical strategies.

Mirrors have a peculiar way of validating identity; we use them to find reassurance about what we look like and often wonder whether inner changes or emotions can manifest themselves in outward appearance, as happens when we check the mirror after a display of intense emotion, such as crying or a fit of rage. Of course the medieval and Renaissance experience of mirrors was radically different from ours; for example, for many centuries it was not a common experience to look at oneself between two large mirrors (and have a three-dimensional view of one's body) and traditional metal mirrors were not always good quality. However, as works on both the use of real mirrors and mirror metaphors in England can testify (Grabes, 1982), in the Elizabethan age there was an unprecedented availability of glass mirrors (although metal mirrors were still in use). Plane mirrors, which offered a partial, albeit clearer, view, gradually started to replace convex mirrors (like the one visible in Van Eyck's Arnolfini portrait of 1434), which might have provided a more global view of the world, but nevertheless produced a distorted image (Melchior-Bonnet, 2002, p. 128).

The best plane glass mirrors were Venetian as glassblowers on the island of Murano first perfected the technique of spreading hot metal (an amalgam of tin and mercury) onto glass. In the sixteenth century Venetian looking-glasses gradually became a mass-produced article exported in quantities to England (Williams, 1957, p. 11; Kalas, 2002). While small-format mirrors were an affordable item of luxury, making glass mirrors was still complicated and expensive; according to Melchior-Bonnet (2002, p. 31), in the early sixteenth century a painting by Raphael was still less costly than a large silver-framed looking glass. Looking at oneself in full figure was therefore very much a prerogative of the wealthy or the aristocracy.

It has been observed that 'it was only with the greatly increased distribution of glass mirrors after 1590 that the utensil took on conventional status as a starting point for literal or metaphorical exploration' (Grabes, 1982, p. 73). Although mirror-titles abound in the Middle Ages, *speculum* being one of the most frequent occurrences (together with *liber* and *summa*) to describe encyclopaedic works and manuals (the fact that 'comprehensive' convex mirrors were popular in the Middle Ages could of course have recalled the analogy between mirror and book, Grabes, 1982, p. 43), the frequency with which references to the mirror can be detected between 1550 and 1660 is quite remarkable. This appears to have been connected to the fascination with perspective and optical effects, and resulted in the creative re-use of a strongly conventionalized image in all its acceptations by Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists.

My essay intends to investigate the way two female rulers, the real Elizabeth I and John Webster's fictional Duchess of Malfi, establish a personal encounter with the mirror, bearing in mind that Elizabeth, 'mirror of Grace and majesty divine', in Spenser's words in *The Faerie Queene* (Proem to Book 1, st.4), inevitably represented both the real and the model mirror in which theatrical female or male rulers had to look at themselves in early modern England. Both Elizabeth and the Duchess try to fashion their identity as female princes in exceptional ways, ways that disregarded traditional notions of appropriate marital status or ideal female qualities such as silence and obedience. Although I am aware of an established critical tradition that sees Arbella Stuart as the Duchess's real-life parallel (Steen, 1991), I believe that a discussion of the complex relationship that the Queen and the Duchess establish with mirrors and artistic replicas of themselves, will highlight the way these rulers explore composite female identities in unconventional

ways, where motherhood (real or metaphorical) is not incompatible with political authority and their sense of inner worth as women and princes is not undermined by dissenting voices (Turner, 2000).

What complicates matters of identity and reflections is the contradictory nature of real and metaphorical mirrors. With no image of its own and enjoying a passive position, the mirror is nevertheless invested with the far from small power to create another image, a duplication which tricks us into believing that it reproduces reality exactly, although it does not. We have a doubling instrument that is also double in the medieval sense of 'characterized by duplicity, false, deceitful' (*OED*); an agent of sameness that produces deceiving reflections, duplicitous as well as double. Divided between alterity and identity, the mirror metaphor is equally used to provide an exemplum or a distorted image, as in the case, for example, of comedy, which was conventionally compared to a mirror which 'achieves its didactic function by revealing a hidden truth and showing up false seeming' (Waith, 1966, p. 19).

As opposed to ancient metal mirrors, where nature could indeed be often seen as 'through a glass darkly', the modern instruments showed reality faithfully, albeit cruelly, as in the pocket mirror owned by Leonardo da Vinci bearing the inscription 'make no complaint, lady, I only give back what you give me' (quoted in Roche, 1956, p. 209).[1] The Italian painter and scientist, in an essay on the mirror as a guide for painters, stressed the importance of the mirror to the artist:

> The mirror ought to be taken as a guide – that is; the flat mirror – for within its surface substances have many points of resemblance to a picture; namely, that you see the picture made upon one plane showing things which appear, in relief, and the mirror upon one plane does the same, the picture is one single surface, and the mirror is the same. (Quoted in Goldberg, 1985, p. 152)

The invention of the looking glass, and its ability to reflect the world clearly, it has been observed, contributed to the age of humanism, which tried to look through and beyond St Paul's dark glass: 'In the spirit of the times society embraced the virtue of the looking glass. Or is it possible that the spirit of the times was influenced by the looking glass?' (Goldberg, 1985, p. 160). Critical views over the importance of the mirror in the formation of self-consciousness in the Renaissance are divided between those who recognize the importance of the mirror in stimulating a sense of the self by lending it to self-examination and individual

affirmation (see for example Shapiro, 1975, p. 43), and others, like Kelly, who see the mirror as 'a radically unstable trope of transition' where 'the physical image in the mirror spins into a kaleidoscope of literary and visual associations' (Kelly, 2002, pp. 8, 5). Elizabethan and Jacobean drama has highlighted in many instances the way our interior world is not identical to our exterior self, whether or not this same exterior self is reflected in a mirror. Hamlet, among others, continually explores the gap between the appearance of corporeality ('I have that within which passes show', 1.2.85; 'That one may smile and smile and be a villain' 1.5.108) and the inner reality of the subject, which may well be more elusive and obscure to the self than the displaced reflection of the body that contains it (Barker, 1995).

Of course, knowing oneself in the mirror is always a transient experience (I am not referring here to any kind of psychological recognition in the Lacanian sense), but one which I believe has implications for the representation (or self-representation) of one's social self, for the kind of appearance that is more familiar to others than to the person who projects that image. As Kelly quite rightly observes, 'there is a strong sense [...] of the mirror as something unfixed, or a means of transit' (Kelly, 2002, p. 19). However, the birth of new literary genres, such as autobiography or pictorial ones like the self-portrait, appear to suggest that the introduction of crystal mirrors may have contributed to (or 'reflected') a new concept of identity. In a very perceptive article, Shuger has warned against a simplified cause–effect relationship between the new Renaissance consciousness and real mirrors as 'the majority of Renaissance mirrors – or rather, mirror metaphors – do reflect a face, but not the face of the person in front of the mirror' (Shuger, 1999, p. 22). She mentions Richard II as the only character in Elizabethan drama who actually looks in a mirror to find out what he looks like (Shuger, 1999, p. 31). Apart from the fact that it is possible to add at least another character to the list of those who look at their real selves in the mirror in early modern drama, namely Webster's *Duchess of Malfi* (1614), I am not sure whether the mirror *always* functions 'according to an ontology of similitude rather than identity/difference' (Shuger, 1999, p. 37).

One is reminded of Spenser's Britomart, a mirror for Elizabeth, whose 'desire for a male-defined identity has grown out of, rather than being manifested within, the mirror vision' (Walker, 1998, p. 80; see also Dark, 2008). True, she sees herself only for an instant in Merlin's magic mirror: 'She had espyde that mirrhour fayre, her selfe a while therein she vewd in vaine' (III.2.22.6). But it is the next image, that of the 'comely knight' Artegall (III.3.24.2), her future husband, which triggers the desire for

the fulfilment of her destiny and encourages her to become 'a martial maid' and a double of the knight that she will be looking for. The magic looking glass may have revealed something of her own identity that she has been keeping hidden until then. Perhaps we should wonder, like Walker, whether it is 'the thing in the mirror, the Other, the reversed image', that is 'stronger or weaker than the figure that generates it' (Walker, 1998, p. 63). Does the mirror almost magically construct/suggest/project a different social self, by giving us a glimpse of what we could become? Both Britomart and Elizabeth had to fashion themselves on male images of power. By looking in a prophetic mirror, Britomart crossed the boundaries between the world of the everyday and the realm of the fantastic and learned about her future progeny (Hendrix, 1995). This was not possible for Elizabeth, although at the time of Spenser's *Faerie Queene* she could still imagine the possibility of a husband and heir. As for looking into prophetic mirrors, Elizabeth could rely on the service of Dr John Dee, the scholar, astrologer and scryer (fortune teller), and try his most famous magic mirror, the Shew-stone. As he records in his diary on 16 March 1575:

> Her Majestie willed me to fetch my glass so famous, and to show unto her some properties of it, which I did; her Majestie being taken down from her horse by the Earl of Leicester, did see some of the properties of that glass to her Majestie's great contentment and delight. (Quoted in Goodrich-Freer, 1889, p. 495, n. 1)

In her position as Queen, Elizabeth was at the time the inevitable recipient of exemplary political mirrors (in the tradition of the Mirrors for Princes or Magistrates) which in the sixteenth century gradually came to replace religious mirrors (Spenser himself held up his text, *The Faerie Queene*, to Elizabeth, so that she could appreciate herself reflected in 'mirrours more than one' (Proem to III.5.6). What characterizes the exemplary mirror is its idealizing and didactic function, encouraging the reader to conform to the model: as is well known, Mirror for Princes literature was *for* as well as *about* Princes. By regularly consulting the exemplary mirror, as one does a real mirror, one might wish to improve one's inner thought in the same way as one would one's outward appearance (Grabes, 1982, p. 49), as Elizabeth may have learned first-hand when she translated Marguerite de Navarre's mystic poem *Le Miroir de l'Âme pecheresse* in 1544 (Prescott, 1985).

If the Queen had to contemplate advice in some literary form as a ruler, as an unmarried woman at least she could ignore the exemplary

function of conduct books for women, which recommended husbands as the mirrors in which wives should see themselves (a situation vaguely similar to that of Britomart looking at her future husband in Merlin's looking glass). In Edmund Tilney's 1568 *Brief and pleasant discourse of duties in Marriage* Lady Julian argues that a wife should try to attune her state of mind and emotions to those of her husband 'whose face must be hir daylie looking glasse, wherein she ought to be alwaise prying, to see when he is merie, when sad, when content, and when discontent, where to she must alwayse frame hir own countenance'. Not exactly a husband-mirroring type, Elizabeth as Queen was herself a princely mirror for others, in the same way as Hamlet is for the court of Denmark 'a glass of fashion and the mould of form, the observed of all observers' (3.1.152–3). In the dedication of *Cynthia's Revels* (1600–1) to the Queen, the 'Special Fountain of Manners', Ben Jonson writes: 'in thee the whole kingdom dresseth itself, and is ambitious to use thee as her glass' (*Works,* IV, p. 33).

In *The Duchess of Malfi* the Duchess's future husband Antonio sings the praises of the 'right noble Duchess' and indicates her as a mirror of all Christian ladies, an exemplary woman and public speaker:

> *Antonio*: For her discourse, it is so full of rapture,
> You only will begin, then to be sorry
> When she doth end her speech: and wish, in wonder,
> She held it less vainglory to talk much
> Than your penance, to hear her: whilst she speaks,
> She throws upon a man so sweet a look,
> That it were able to raise one to a galliard
> That lay in a dead palsy: and to dote
> On that sweet countenance: but in that look
> There speaketh so divine a countenance,
> As cuts off all lascivious, and vain hope.
> Her days are practis'd in such noble virtue,
> That, sure her nights, nay more, her very sleeps,
> Are more in heaven, than other ladies' shrifts.
> Let all sweet ladies break their flatt'ring glasses,
> And dress themselves in her.
>
> (1.2.112–27)

When we look at an *exemplary* image in the mirror we do not expect to see a faithful reflection of a real person. So, as Shuger has argued,

'the gazing subject becomes irrelevant because . . . the mirror is really a painting' (Shuger, 1999, p. 30). Mirrors and paintings in Renaissance texts are often interchangeable. The glass for self-scrutiny that Hamlet, in the closet scene, suggests that his mother should use ('till I set you up a glass where you may see the inmost part of you' 3.4.18–19) is in fact a portrait, or rather, two portraits or miniatures: 'Look here upon this picture, and on this, the counterfeit presentment of two brothers' (3.4.51–2). By comparing a picture of Hamlet's father with one of the present King, the Queen actually manages to 'turn her eyes into her soul' where she sees 'black and grieved spots' (87–8), marking the distance between the model and the less than perfect image of her weakness.

If a portrait preserves an image for all time while the mirror registers only a transitory reflection, the need for the self to be visually represented is satisfied by both mirror and painting; like the mirror, at once truthful and deceitful, the meaning of the Renaissance portrait wavers between the laudable deception of art that attempts to reproduce its model and the counterfeiting of reality. Such ambiguity lies in the term itself, *counterfeit* (as in Bassanio's cry: 'Fair Portia's counterfeit!' 3.3.115) which in the Elizabethan period (as the *OED* reports) could either mean 'represented, made to a pattern, fashioned' or deceitful misrepresentation, 'a false or spurious imitation'.

Elizabeth was, to say the least, ambivalent towards mirrors: legend has it, as Ben Jonson's reported conversation with Drummond indicates, that 'Queen Elizabeth never saw her self after she became old in a true Glass' (*Works,* I, 141–2). At some point in her life she had all the mirrors removed from her apartments, while her state portraits proliferated, so that the only mirrors in which the Queen could contemplate herself for many years were the pictorial representations over which she exercised strict control. Interestingly enough, recent research by social psychologists seems to confirm that we tend to internalize and recognize enhanced images of ourselves as real. In an experiment discussed by Epley and Whitchurch in the 2008 issue of the *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin,* when asked to identify pictures of themselves among a series of computer-modified portraits (which created slightly more or less attractive versions of their faces), participants chose faces that had been made more attractive. This inner tendency to use Photoshop seems only to apply to one's self-image, as the people involved in the experiment could spot the unenhanced faces of friends or relatives without difficulty. Whether this attitude is a more typical product of our culture or a transhistoric tendency, it appears, not surprisingly, that exposure to mirror images makes each one of us a potential Narcissus.

From 1580 onwards, as Strong reports, action was taken to suppress images of the Queen that depicted her as old – artists were required to copy what was later called 'the Mask of Youth', a youthful face pattern which emphasized the Queen's eternal beauty (Strong, 2003, p. 147). Suppression of mirrors in her household as well as unflattering likenesses in her portraits seem to point to a similar strategy – when the Queen looked at her reflection, she had to see a mighty monarch as well as an ageless, beautiful woman. Elizabeth gave up the fleeting pleasure of even an occasional glimpse of 'real' magnificence and even beauty (after all she was blessed with an enviably youthful figure until the end) in order to be able to admire static and partially unfaithful artistic representations of power. As Strong observes; 'This may not have reflected vanity so much as a genuine fear of the dangers inherent in dwelling on the physical mortality of the sovereign while the succession was unsettled' (Strong, 2003, p. 20).

Choosing state portraits that would defy the transitoriness of one's reflection and the inevitable decay of one's body over more private mirrors could mean privileging one's public identity over the private. If this was Queen Elizabeth's choice, Webster's Duchess appears to head in the opposite direction. When the ruler of Malfi is courting Antonio – mirroring what a male suitor should do – she invites him to see her as *different* from the artistic representation in the funeral monument of her first husband:

> This is flesh and blood Sir
> 'Tis not the figure cut in alabaster
> Kneels at my husband's tomb.
>
> (I.ii.370–2)

By stressing that she is a different person from her representation as a kneeling figure, the Duchess (whose first name we are never told – her individuality apparently being at one with her office) associates her public role with the motionless transparency of marble. It is precisely this static and tributary representation that she tries to subvert in the course of the play. In her determination not to worry about the consequences that her transgression will inevitably bring about, the Duchess rejects the immobility, that of 'death in life', which is required of her by social conventions: she is not yet willing to 'freeze' in a position of eternal devotion and fidelity to her dead husband. Although the Duchess's representation as an alabaster statue is an effective visual metaphor for the

prison of her public role, she actively chooses not to abide by the laws of a patriarchal world that imposes physical bounds to the development of female personality. The Duchess's sculpture can be identified as the 'cast' that the patriarchal world has devised to mould the female ruler into a subordinate human being, a cast that the Duchess tries to escape from by marrying a social inferior. As Turner has observed, 'because the Duchess is both a ruler and a woman, she is able to develop a multi-dimensional identity' (Turner, 2000, p. 391). Later she will use the image of the encased holy relic to describe her confinement at court:

> Why should only I,
> Of all the other princes of the world,
> Be cas'd up, like a holy relic? I have youth,
> And a little beauty.
>
> (3.2.137–9)

Her maid Cariola defines the Duchess's dilemma as a competition between 'the spirit of greatness or of woman' (1.1.417; unlike Antonio, she does not believe her mistress to be a mirror for noble ladies), thus setting in opposition the natural, weak body of the Duchess and the perpetuity of her body politic. These two identities, which appear irreconciliable to Cariola, were of course part of the political theology which supported the presence of a female monarch on the throne of England.

Even the last association between the Duchess and her artistic replica has a funereal connotation (Neill, 1982). The same Cariola replies to the Duchess's question 'Who do I look like now?' (4.2.31) with another comparison taken from art:

> *Cariola*: Like to your picture in the gallery,
> A deal of life in show, but none in practice;
> Or rather like some reverend monument
> Whose ruins are ever pitied.
>
> (IV.ii.32–4)

But the statue of the kneeling figure and the official portrait only represent her official, 'royal' identity: Webster's female ruler of Malfi is obsessively trying to define and combine both her public role, which she clings to when she is deposed and imprisoned ('I am Duchess of Malfi still' 4.2.139) and her private one. Unlike the painting in the gallery, which freezes the Duchess in a royal posture empty of life, her mirror

registers the experience of aging, a situation which Queen Elizabeth apparently never encountered in her mature age. It is a domestic scene. The Duchess has asked her servant to bring her a mirror so that she can remove her jewels and brush her hair before going to bed (Booth, 1991, pp. 104–5). While the Duchess is performing these operations, she keeps chatting with her maid Cariola and her husband (who after a while leave her to talk to herself as a joke) all the while checking for grey hairs and thinking of old age:

> Bring me the casket hither, and the glass;
> You get no lodging here to-night, my lord.
> [. . .] I prithee
> When were we so merry? My hair tangles. [. . .]
> Doth not the colour of my hair 'gin to change?
> When I wax grey, I shall have all the court
> Powder their hair with arras, to be like me.
>
> (3.2.1–2; 52–3; 58–61)

In the mirror the Duchess sees the reflection of a woman who is no longer young but is nevertheless proud of her femininity and fruitful womb; after compiling a mental blazon to check on signs of age, she advises her husband not to approach her bed while her brother is in court for fear of discovery. In Webster's play the looking glass is quite real (unlike Antonio's earlier definition of the Duchess as a mirror for ladies), a dramatic prop that is eventually functional to the Duchess's revelation of her married state (Martinet, 1981, p. 278). While she is looking at herself and chatting away, her brother enters the room and, unseen, approaches her with a dagger. Can the Duchess catch Ferdinand's reflection in the mirror? We know that Ferdinand is the Duchess's twin so, in a way, the Duchess could be confronted with another double of herself in the mirror, a confrontation that is optically even more challenging than when Dromio of Ephesus says to Dromio of Syracuse, 'methinks you are my glass, and not my brother' (*The Comedy of Errors,* 5.1.417).

Ferdinand is a distorted reflection of the Duchess, her dark double both as a human being and a Prince of royal blood: the peculiar arrangement of the two characters on stage (and their reflections in the looking glass) also recalls conventional representations of a devil behind a woman at her mirror. Farah Karim-Cooper, who has analysed this scene in terms of cosmetic practices, has observed that:

> Her outward gestures of correcting her beauty also symbolize her internal beautification. Although she appears to be full of pride, the dignity of the Duchess remains intact, undermining the orthodox anti-cosmetic critique that characters like Bosola recite in the play. (Karim-Cooper, 2006, p. 96)

The fact is that the image a female ruler projects in the mirror inevitably evokes *vanity* as well as authority and moral self-scrutiny, which may dangerously recall the 'Mirror Mirror on the Wall' of fairy tales and folklore. It is an association that even male rulers, or would-be rulers, look on with contempt. Richard III, for example, refuses to contemplate himself in the narcissistic mirror: 'I am not shaped for sportive tricks nor made to court an amorous looking glass' (1.1.14–15). On the contrary, Richard II requires a looking glass in the hope that the mirror, conventionally associated with the book, might have a revealing function: 'the very book indeed, where all my sins are writ, and that's myself' (4.1.274–5). But Richard's glass does not work at a metaphorical level: it simply will not be made to function either as a 'book' or as a tool for spiritual and moral investigation; it is just a prop, a symbol of vanity which cannot show the internal turmoil of the King, a screen which has failed to reveal what is beyond 'the shadow of [his] face' (293). Unlike Richard II, who looks in vain for 'deeper wrinkles' (276), the Duchess does see an aging woman in the mirror, in a similar manner to the lady portrayed in *Vanitas* by Bernardo Strozzi (1581–1644). Despite the fact that the painting may have been intended as a warning, in the play age does not seem to be wholly incompatible with beauty (Dolan, 1993). The contemplation of the aging process which ultimately points to mortality is a common experience as well as a source of conventional symbolic associations. The mirror often appears in relation to vanity and death, as a reminder of the *vanitas* theme, a warning that beauty will eventually turn to dust: 'The mirror punctuates the hours much like the hourglass, so that man becomes aware of his mortality' (Melchior-Bonnet, 2002, p. 209). According to one of the many apocryphal stories about Elizabeth, just before dying the Queen asked for a looking-glass:

> Now falling into extremity, she sat two days and three nights upon her stool, ready dressed, and could never be brought by any of her Council to go to bed, or to eat and drink [...] Afterward, in the melancholy of her sickness, she desired to see a true looking glass [...] which glass being brought her, and took it so offensively, that

> some which before had flattered her, durst nor come into her sight. (Nichols, 1823, Book 3, p. 612)

Watching her crumbling image, 'like some reverend monument whose ruins are ever pitied' (*Duchess* 4.2.33–4), Queen Elizabeth beheld her own mortality; perhaps, 'much possessed by death', she could already see, like Webster in Eliot's words, 'the skull beneath the skin' ('Whispers of Immortality', ll.1–2). Catching a glimpse of a decayed and deathlike reflection, after many years of contemplating endless painted images of a magically unaging body or listening to the flattery of the court, must have been quite a moment of dramatic recognition. In a way the Queen's apparition in the mirror was another example of the 'death in the mirror theme' in painting, while spectators of *The Revenger's Tragedy*, in which the skull of a chaste lady named Gloriana is dressed and made up grotesquely for revenge, would have been reminded of the old Queen's last years where 'the Petrarchan image of the living Gloriana merges with its inverted mirror image, woman as death's head' (Finke, 1984, p. 358; see also Mullaney, 1994).

What Ferdinand sees in the mirror, however, as if in an anamorphic painting which reveals a secret image simply by shifting slightly the position of the viewer, is not an aging yet beautiful Duchess but a 'hideous thing' that eclipses virtue (3.2.73), a lusty woman. The mirror featured regularly in Renaissance literature on courtesans and can be seen to decorate their rooms in a number of paintings (Santore, 1997), the most famous of which is probably Titian's *Young Woman at her Toilette* (*ca*.1515). One wonders whether this association between the mirror and vanity, and between the mirror and lust, may be the reason for the scarcity of representations of Queen Elizabeth with a mirror. After all, the mirror is also an attribute of prudence (*prudenza*), as in Cesare Ripa's *Iconology* (1593, Figure 14.1) or truth (*verità*); but at the same time, it invariably occurs in depictions of lasciviousness (*lascivia*) and pride (*superbia*). The mirror appears quite capable of sustaining opposite meanings (Schwartz, 1952, p. 105): in its symbolic associations as well as its evocation of the 'shifting shape of identity in modes of exchange', the mirror is indeed 'a trope of displacement' (Kelly 2002, p. 108).

The only picture of Elizabeth projecting her image onto the mirror that I have been able to trace is 'Queen Elizabeth dressed in a crimson gown' (Figure 14.2), an illumination at the margin of a poem written by Georges de la Motte, a Huguenot refugee, and presented to the Queen in 1586. The body of the Queen is placed between a looking glass and a terrestrial globe, so that although we see the reflection of the Queen in



Figure 14.1 Cesare Ripa, *Prudenza* (*Iconologia*, Padua, 1618) © Biblioteca del Seminario Vescovile di Padova



Figure 14.2 Elizabeth, globe and mirror; detail from Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Fr. e. 1 (f. 14r), detail © The Bodleian Library, University of Oxford

the mirror, we do not see clearly that of the globe. Are we meant to contemplate a Queen who is about to admire herself in the mirror, whose imperial (global) aspirations reinforce her relationship with the land and the nation as in the Ditchley portrait? The idea of Elizabeth as a universal monarch was circulating in the last decades of the sixteenth century. In *First Fruits* (1578) John Florio enthusiastically supported the idea of an emperor 'monarcha e signore di tutto il mondo' (Florio, 1578, p. 81), a title that Guevara had attributed to Charles V, while Giordano Bruno in *La Cena delle Ceneri* (1584) explicitly indicated Elizabeth as the universal ruler who could implement his utopia of religious as well as political universalism.[2]

In Ripa's compendium of allegorical figures collected from various artistic and literary sources, *scienza*, which of course should be understood in the wider sense of science, knowledge or wisdom (Figure 14.3) is represented as a lady holding a mirror in her right hand and a globe and triangle in her left. According to Ripa's description, in the mirror



Figure 14.3 Cesare Ripa, *Scienza* (*Iconologia,* Padua, 1618) © Biblioteca del Seminario Vescovile di Padova

she contemplates the essence of things while the globe shows that 'science cannot countenance opposite opinions, just as the Globe cannot turn in an opposite direction' (Ripa, 1992, p. 394).[3] Again, mirror and wisdom form a conventional symbolic association, as in Hymn XXII of John Davies's *Hymnes to Astrea* (1599), in which wisdom is represented as Elizabeth's teacher and ultimately identifies with Elizabeth herself:

> **E**gle-eyed Wisedome, lifes Loadstarre,
> **L**ooking neare on things a farre;
> **I**oves best beloved daughter,
> **S**howes to her Spirit all things that are,
> **A**s Jove himselfe has taught her.
>
> **B**y this straight rule she rectifies
> **E**ach thought that in her hart doth rise:
> **T**his is her cleare true mirror,
> **H**er looking glasse, wherein she spies
> **A**ll forms of Truth and Error.
>
> (Krueger, 1975, pp. 83–4)

As in the illumination, the glass captures the elusive reality of a lady in power (it has been suggested that the dress was possibly the Parliament kirtle); the Queen may be here represented as establishing a possible link between Vanity and Authority, between Truth and Knowledge, in an attempt at reconciling female representation of beauty with the call to an imperial vocation. Having internalized the virtue of wisdom, the Virgin Queen can read the world in the mirror: herself a mirror for both governors and ladies, Elizabeth gives form and meaning to the world. As the French poem accompanying the picture says, being absolutely perfect, the Queen turns other perfections into imperfections as her name and virtue are celebrated at the four corners of the world.

If Elizabeth can be seen to frame Webster's play as the exemplary female governor and archetypal 'woman on top', the Duchess threatens the entire patriarchal order by ruling her Dukedom and refusing to transform herself into an artistic and political icon. The Duchess, whose role as a wife and mother looking at her own mortality in the mirror could not be reconciled to her position as a ruler (Jankowski, 1990, p. 235), cannot end as *Eliza triumphans*: her court denies her the flattering glasses of courtiers. If one is left to wonder whether the Duchess represents a model ruler at all, her exemplary death, characterized by

faith, fortitude and humility seems to emphasize that she indeed is a model Christian prince:

> Heavens' gates are not so highly arch'd
> As princes' palaces: they that enter there must go upon their knees.
>
> (4.2.228–30)

In the last moments of her theatrical life, the villain Bosola embodies the mirror that she desperately needs in order to make sense of her identity, possibly in the same way as Elizabeth sent for a looking glass just before dying. When the Duchess asks 'Am I not thy Duchess?', and 'Who am I?', he replies: 'my trade is to flatter the dead and not the living' (4.2.144). Despite (or because of) the fact that he will be her murderer, Bosola helps her come to terms with death – thus assisting in completing the process of self-scrutiny that the Duchess herself started by looking at herself in a real glass:

> Didst thou ever see a lark in a cage? Such is the soul in the body: this world is like her little turf of grass, and the heaven o'er our heads, *like her looking-glass*, only gives us a miserable knowledge of the small compass of our prison. (4.2.128–31)

Bosola's description reminds us of a baroque painted ceiling, a *trompe-l'oeil* device that leads us to believe that we contemplate the world, instead of a mere replica or reflection of the world. In a play obsessed with the widening gulf between appearance and reality, the villain himself appears to be setting up a glass where the Duchess can see the inmost part of herself and her ruling aspirations. It is a glass that reveals that the Duchess's court life was nothing but a golden cage, where the act of creating a space for her private identity was ultimately as transient as the experience of watching herself in the mirror.

Notes

1. 'Di me non ti doler donna giamai che ben ti rendo quel che tu mi dai'.
2. 'I mean Elizabeth, who in her title and royal dignity is not inferior to any king in the world [...] Indeed, if the power of fortune corresponded and equalled that of her most noble spirit and nature, this great Amphitrite would surely open her mantle and so much enlarge its circumference as to embrace not only Britain and Ireland but another whole globe as well, equal in size to the whole universe: wherefore with fuller meaning, her powerful hand would

sustain the globe of a general and whole monarchy' (Bruno, 1995, p. 119; 'Elizabetta dico, che per titolo e dignità regia non è inferiore a qualsivoglia re, che sii nel mondo [...] Se l'imperio de la fortuna corrispondesse e fusse agguagliato a l'imperio del generosissimo spirto ed ingegno, bisognerebbe che questa grande Amfitrite aprisse le sue fimbrie, ed allargasse tanto la sua circonferenza, che sì come gli comprende una Britannia ed Ibernia, gli desse un altro globo intiero, che venisse ad uguagliarsi a la mole universale, onde con più piena significazione la sua potente mano sustente il globo d'una generale ed intiera monarchia', (Bruno, 1985, pp. 67–8).

3. 'La scienza non ha contrarietà di opinioni, come l'orbe non ha contrarietà di moto'.

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